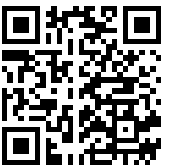
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

https://books.google.com



247194 c 9

826.121 T 1

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

WILD WHITE MAN

AND THE

BLACKS OF VICTORIA.

By JAMES BONWICK,

LATE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS, VICTORIA,

AND AUTHOR OF "GEOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND," "DISCOVERY AND SETTLEMENT OF PORT PHILLIP," "WESTERN VICTORIA," ETC.

SECOND EDITION.

MELBOURNE:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY FERGUSSON & MOORE, FLINDERS LANE EAST.

Digitized by Google

247194 . c . 9

826-121 v. 1.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

DISCOVERY OF BUCKLEY.

Digitized by Google

William Buckley

THE WILD WHITE MAN

AND THE

BLACKS OF VICTORIA.

BY

JAMES BONWICK,

LATE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS, VICTORIA,

AND AUTHOR OF "GEOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND,"
"DISCOVERY AND SETTLEMENT OF PORT PHILLIP," "WESTERN VICTORIA," &c. &c.

SECOND EDITION.

Melbourne:
PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY FERGUSSON & MOORE, FLINDERS LANE EAST.
1863.

826-121 v 1
247194.5.9
Digitized by Google

MELBOURNE:

FERGUSSON AND MOORE, PRINTERS,

FLINDERS LANE EAST.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

	Page.
LIFE OF BUCKLEY	1
JAMES MORRILL	16
BLACKS OF VICTORIA	18
EARLY STORIES OF THE BLACKS	19
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	30
INTELLIGENCE	31
CHARACTER	32
CLOTHING AND ORNAMENTS	34
HOMES AND FOOD	35
HUNTING	36
SONGS AND DANCES	37
WOMEN AND CHILDREN	41
MARRIAGES	43
INFANTICIDE AND CANNIBALISM	48
WEAPONS	50
RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION	52
MISSIONS	59
DISEASES	64
DEATH AND BURIAL	66
LANGUAGE	67
ORIGIN OF OUR NATIVES	70
CONFLICTS OF WHITES AND BLACKS	73
NATIVE RIGHTS AND BRITISH RULE	77
PROTECTORS AND NATIVE POLICE	78
GOVERNMENT OF TRIBES AND NUMBERS	79
CIVILISATION	81
DECLINE	84
APPENDIX	88

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BUCKLEY, THE WILD WHITE MAN;

AND THE BLACKS OF VICTORIA.

THERE is, at times, a temptation to the narrator of a wonderful story to add the charms of fiction to the details of facts, when the material for the construction of the tale is inadequate to the interest of the event. That a white man should be recovered by his countrymen, after a residence of more than thirty years among savages, appears so romantic an incident, as to excite a general and an eager desire to become fully acquainted with such a life in the wilds.

As the first duty of the historian is to elicit the truth with singleness of aim and ardour of pursuit, we prefer bringing together the few reliable facts for the story, than indulging in agreeable fancies. Instead of giving a connected life of WILLIAM BUCKLEY, THE WILD WHITE MAN, we shall bring forward various statements about this extraordinary character, in the very language of the authorities, at the risk of seeming somewhat dry in detail and irregular in description.

This decision appears the more necessary, because of the course taken by a gentleman who, several years ago, published what he called an "Autobiography of William Buckley," to the authenticity of which there are many grave objections; while, at the same time, the statements respecting the Port Phillip Blacks are very incorrect, as this gentleman was personally unacquainted with them. All whom we have consulted, and who knew Buckley both in Port Phillip and in Hobart Town, agree in saying that the man was so dull and reserved that it was impossible to get any connected or reliable information from him.

With the view of correcting some impressions upon this subject, we were induced to publish an account in 1857. The estimate formed of its intention and execution may be seen from the following extract from a review of the first edition of the work, in the columns of the Hobart Town *Colonial Times*, in 1857:—"Here is another of that series of volumes, or rather tractates, upon the colonies and their early history, which Mr. Bonwick has planned with much sagacity, and is executing with every title to respectful consideration. The volume before us is a very interesting one. It is a critical investigation of the life of Buckley, published some time since in Hobart Town, which, with some truth, has a great admixture of falsehood. Mr. Bonwick eliminates the latter," &c., &c.

As evidence that we are not mistaken as to the character of Buckley, the testimony of others is presented here. When Governor Bourke saw him in 1837, he could make nothing of him. A few monosyllabic replies only could be obtained, according to our own informants, Captain Fyans and Dr. Thomson, of Geelong. Captain Lonsdale, to whose regiment he was formerly attached, vainly sought some knowledge of his career. Mr. Fawkner styled him, in 1837, "a lump of matter, too mindless to yield any very useful information." Mr. George Arden, the earliest writer in Port Phillip, says:—"His extreme reserve renders it almost impossible to learn anything from him of his past life, or of his acquaintance with the aborigines." Mr. Westgarth, the colonial historian, remarked many years ago of him, "He was always extremely reserved and incommunicable in his manners." A Van Diemen's Land newspaper, of July, 1836, referring to the man, says, "He never kept any account as to how time passed away." Mr. Thomas, the Protector, who is better acquainted with the Port Phillip Blacks and their history than any other man, had a contemptible opinion of the Wild White Man's capacity, as he says, "Buckley was more ignorant than the blacks, and perfectly useless to them."

Captain Stokes, the Australian voyager, observes of him:—"His intellect, if he ever possessed any such, had almost entirely

Digitized by Google

deserted him, and nothing of any value could be procured from him respecting the history and manners of the tribe with whom he had so long dwelt." Mr. Bunce, the botanist, went to him in company with the late Dr. Ross, editor of the Hobart Town *Courier*. "Our visit," said he, "was not absolutely void of self-interest, as we had contemplated the probability, or rather possibility, of obtaining from the great semi-barbarian materials of his long residence among the aborigines of Port Phillip for an interesting shred of autobiography. Our visit, however, proved a failure, as we could obtain no information from the party whose memoirs we were desirous of perpetuating and whose conversation consisted merely of a few monosyllabic words." Referring afterwards to the *soi-distant* autobiography which appeared, Mr. Bunce says:—"We know not which most to admire—the extreme facility of acquiring information from a, to us, dumb man, or his remarkable powers of imagination."

A man who lived with Buckley for nearly six months, in 1836, assured us that a more stupid fellow he never knew, and that during the whole of that period he scarcely ever spoke to him, and never gave the least information about his thirty years' bush life. We ourselves lived for eight years in the same town with Buckley, almost daily seeing his gigantic figure slowly pacing along the middle of the road, with his eyes vacantly fixed upon some object before him, never turning his head to either side or saluting a passer by. He seemed as one not belonging to our world. Not being divested of curiosity, we often endeavoured to gain from some one of his acquaintances a little narrative of that savage life, but utterly failed in doing so. Some folks tried the effect of the steaming vapour of the punch-bowl with no better success, for though his eye might glisten a little, his tongue was silent. He had no tale to tell.

We proceed now to say what is known about the history of this remarkable character, and to detail some incidents connected with the period of his career, as contained in the chronicles of the colonies.

William Buckley was born about 1780, in Macclesfield, Cheshire. He was early apprenticed to a bricklayer. After approaching manhood he forsook the trowel, and never resumed it but once, when, in 1837, he put up a rough chimney to the hut of his friend Batman, on the site of Melbourne. A tolerable specimen of physical humanity, being six feet six inches in height, with no native love of hard work, he soon enlisted for a bounty into the Cheshire Militia, from which he was eventually drafted into the 4th, or King's Own Regiment. So tall a grenadier would have charmed old Frederick William, who would have rejoiced in such a recruit for his Potsdam Guard.

The rougher characteristics of his nature now appeared so prominently, that the army lost the benefit of his services, and the country of his presence. At this distance of time it is difficult to know the crime with which he was charged; larceny, say some; while he spoke of a blow given to his officer.

Some fourteen years before this, the British Government had established a penal settlement thousands of miles from the residence of any white men of any nation, quite at the antipodes, on the shores of New Holland, more popularly, but incorrectly, known as Botany Bay. Our ex-bricklayer and ex-soldier was sentenced to that distant kangaroo retreat.

But about that time another resolution of the Government altered the destiny of Buckley. Captain Flinders had sailed into a harbour on the southern coast of New Holland, opposite the shores of Tasman's Van Diemen's Land, and was so charmed with the delicious climate, lovely scenery, and luxuriant vegetation of this *Port Phillip*, as to recommend it very warmly to the Home Authorities, as a suitable locality for a new penal establishment, similar to that at Port Jackson. Adopting the suggestion, the British Ministry directed a prison fleet to land its burden of crime upon this Utopia of the South. William Buckley was to be one of these first unsuccessful settlers of the golden land of Victoria.

We may form some judgment of the wisdom of our ancestors in the work of colonisation, by glancing at the materials they sent to form a colony at Port Phillip. There were three hundred male prisoners, fifty marines to maintain order, besides officers in command, and but seventeen women, chiefly wives of some soldiers.

The *Calcutta*, a man-of-war, and the *Ocean*, a transport, conveyed the company, and reached there on the 10th of October, 1803. Captain Collins, the Lieutenant-Governor, landed the people on a sandy, sterile part of the beach, a few miles inside of the Heads, not far from Point Nepean, where no river or fresh lake existed, and where the soil forbade hope of profitable cultivation. Had they gone on the opposite side of the Bay, or ascended to the head of the Bay where the Yarra reaches the sea, a successful settlement might have been formed. A pretended search for a better locality was afterwards made with no result but failure; and so, after a sojourn of three months on what they deemed an inhospitable soil, though in a delightful climate, the expedition moved

Digitized by Google

off to the Derwent of Van Diemen's Land, and established the city of Hobart Town.

A natural love of freedom induced many to seek an opportunity of escape, even though it were to the savage wilds of a savage race. Several attempted, and failed. One convict was shot by a sentinel, who could not induce him to return. A few succeeded. Among the latter was William Buckley.

Some conflicting stories are told of the fate of Buckley's companions. It is clear that they sought at first to get as far as possible from the settlement, to avoid capture. To the south lay the ocean, and to the west the Bay. The east, from a recent expedition to Western Port, was known to be a wilderness, with little water, and without any apparent means of subsistence. There was but one resource left to them,—to proceed northward, head the Bay, and, perhaps, round it, so as to reach the opposite shore. Marmon and Pye are said to be the names of the two who fled with Buckley. When subsequently interrogated as to their fate, nothing satisfactory was ever elicited from Buckley. He made it appear, however, that they left him with the intention of returning to the settlement. One who lived in the bush with him told us that he often tried to worm out the secret, but without success. When pressed with questions Buckley would get angry, and walk away, or else begin to jabber to himself in the native language. Mr. John Pascoe Fawkner, a boy with Buckley in the fleet of 1803, afterwards the originator of the Press of Port Phillip in 1836, and now an honoured legislator of Victoria, never liked the man, and has this version of his story:—"He refused, or was unable to account for the fate of the two men that left the camp with him in 1803; indeed, some persons entertained notions on this head that rendered his appearance amongst the white population not very agreeable." This implied charge of cannibalism, through dire necessity, is hardly likely to be true; his stolid indifference and frigid silence, when questioned, must not be taken as an admission of guilt.

He was thus soon left alone, and became separated from his countrymen for a period of thirty-two years! He must have early attracted the notice of the aborigines, among whom he subsequently lived, and to whose habits he wholly conformed his being. Their uniform kindness to the stranger exhibits their character in an amiable light, and led Mr. Thomas, the aborigines' protector, to say, "The preservation of Buckley for thirty-two years, without in the whole period ever ill-using him, ought ever indelibly to mark them as a humane race."

Fain would we picture the home life of this "man of the woods." Fancy draws him in an alcove retreat, on the flowery banks of a murmuring stream, gliding through the rosy hours in companionship with a swarthy Delilah of the forest, with no domestic annoyances, no cares of household, and no trouble for the means of living. Dwelling under the smiling skies of Australia, undisturbed in his serenity by the storms of life, honoured by the sable chiefs, and courted by the ebon daughters, how enviable his lot!

How he might have signalised himself in the councils of the tribe, and astonished their savage minds with the prowess of civilisation! How he could have gathered a throng of listeners beneath the gum-tree shade, and rehearsed the deeds of the great Cæsar, the Macedonian hero, or the young Bonaparte, who had just then crossed the Alps and mounted the Pyramids; or, he might have referred to the struggles of his countrymen for freedom, and pictured before them the vale of Runnymeade, the field of Naseby, and the fleet at Torquay. Again, he could have told them, too, other wonders of his native land,—the farm, the mine, the mill, the palace; and then have spoken of gorgeous cathedrals, and more humble fanes; and sought to bring their savage natures not alone to practise works of art, but bow before one God, as children to a father.

The Peruvians tell of the white-faced stranger who raised them from barbarism; and who has not sometimes wished to play the heroic part of a Howard-Alfred in some sunny, distant isle?

Thirty years with a tribe! What lengthened opportunity for usefulness! But, as, after the lapse of decaying centuries, memorials still attest the ancient march of progress, so may we reasonably expect to witness some illustration of the elevating influence of the thirty years' residence of an Englishman among savages. But alas! we see nothing of the kind.

Not a thought of civilisation seems ever to have entered the head of the man. He knew that just across the Bay were deserted gardens of European vegetables, whose growth would furnish a change of food for his dark friends; but he took no heed of them. The clay about him might have led his ingenuity and benevolence to teach the people to construct more comfortable winter dwellings, and to store their shelves with crockery: but the bricklayer sank rapidly into the savage. Skins could have been easily changed into more suitable clothing, and fabrics of utility and beauty made from native products; but he preferred the dirty, lazy life of the barbarian. His Christian birth and education became no incentives to the preservation of his own ideas of religion

Digitized by Google

and awoke no missionary zeal for his forest brethren.

Moodily silent as he was for the last twenty years of his life, we can readily believe that the preceding thirty years were as unproductive of mental activity. He spent a dreamy, solitary life. Wives he had, like the rest; but, from all that can be learned, he lived much apart from the tribe, impelled, perhaps, from a regard to his personal safety as much as from a love of retirement. He thought only of passing his time unmolested and unmolesting, impressionless and unimpressing,—a mere vegetable existence.

To three persons only was he in any way communicative, and that within a year of of his being discovered; those were Mr. John Batman, the first settler of Port Phillip, Mr. John Helder Wedge, the surveyor of the association settling the country, and Mr. Gellibrand, the leading spirit of that colonising movement.

The first has left no record of the man. The second wrote a brief account, which was sent by Governor Arthur, in 1836, to the "Geographical Society's Journal;" he has also favoured the writer with other memoranda, which will appear in this work. The third, formerly Attorney-General of Van Diemen's Land, left a brief journal of his tour through the country in company with Buckley. These are the only reliable sources of information respecting his forest life.

Having been personally acquainted with several of Mr. Batman's daughters, and with the second husband of Mrs. Batman, we got some particulars of this strange being from them. Miss Batman was much struck with the ungainly figure of the white giant, when he visited the schooner which had brought the family across to the Yarra, and with the enormous foot that descended the companion-ladder. She had the honour of making his first shirt. Although informed by her of the exact number of yards or ells of cloth consumed in this pile of needle-work, we regret our inability to transfer such intelligence to our fair readers, from the usual masculine incapacity to retain impressions of domestic economy.

Mr. Wedge has this statement, in 1836:—"Buckley alone continued his wanderings along the beach, and completed the circuit of the Port; at last became weary of such a precarious existence, and determined upon returning. Soon after he had reached, on his return back, the neighbourhood of Indented Head (towards Geelong), he fell in with the family of natives, with whom he continued to live till the 12th of July, 1835, the day on which he joined the party left by Mr. Batman.

"His memory fails him as to dates; but he supposes his falling in with the natives to have occurred about twelve months after his leaving the establishment. The natives received him with great kindness; he soon attached himself to the chief, named Nullaboin, and accompanied him in all his wanderings. From the time of his being abandoned by his companions till his final return to the establishment, a period of thirty-three years, he had not seen a white man. For the first few years his mind and time were fully occupied in guarding against the treachery of strange Indians, and in procuring food; he, however, soon acquired knowledge of the language, adopted the native habits, and became quite as one of the community. The natives gave him a wife, but, discovering that she had a preference for another, he relinquished her, though the woman and her paramour forfeited their lives, having violated the custom which prevails among them; for when a woman is promised as a wife, which generally happens as soon as she is born, it is considered a most binding engagement—the forfeiture is visited with the most summary vengeance."

Mr. Wedge elsewhere proceeds:—"On one occasion Buckley accompanied me on an excursion for a week, during which we fell in with the family he had lived with. If I had any doubts as to his never having seen a white man during his residence with the natives (and I confess, knowing that the sailors were in the habit of sometimes visiting this part of the coast, I was not without them at first) they were now entirely removed. Nullaboin and his family had never seen a white man, with the exception of Buckley, till he saw me. He received and examined me with great curiosity, opening my waistcoat and shirt to see whether the whole of my body was white."

From the assumed autobiography of the man it would appear that he saw whites several times. Subsequently, even, Buckley gave Mr. Wedge another version of his life. We subjoin that gentleman's statement:—

"During a ride with Buckley on my second visit to Port Phillip, he corrected his former statement of never having seen a white man during his residence with the natives. He stated that on one occasion a small craft was in the port, not far from its entrance. He was on a peninsula, on the eastern side of Swan Bay, on Indented Head, when a boat from the craft with three or four men in it put on shore, I think I understood him, for the purpose of burying

Digitized by Google

one of their companions. He watched them unobserved for some time till they were about returning to their vessel, when he made his appearance, and intimated his wish, by repeating the few words of English he could remember at the moment, to accompany them. They probably mistook him for a native, as they might do from his long beard, hair, spear, &c., and being habited in his opossum rug, and took no heed of him. On the following morning they came again on shore, and coo-eyed (*i. e.* called out) as he supposes for the purpose of his again making his appearance. But he had changed his mind, suspecting them of treachery, and remained concealed among the trees and shrubs in the peninsula."

Mr. Gellibrand, a romantic admirer of the natives, and a warm friend to Buckley, gives us, in 1837, a most interesting account of the family among whom our hero had lived. It exhibits him as of a harmless and gentle nature, if unblessed with force of mental character. Even the absence of intensity of passion, and vigour of will, exposed him less to the resentment of the strong, and rendered him an object of the sympathy of the weak. He had, at least, endeared himself to the few who knew him best. We quote from Mr. Gellibrand's journal.

"February 5th. We started very early in the morning under the expectation that we should see the natives; and in order that they should not be frightened, I directed Buckley to advance, and we would follow him at the distance of a quarter of a mile. Buckley made towards a native well, and after he had ridden about eight miles, we heard a coo-ey, and when we arrived at the spot, I witnessed one of the most pleasing and affecting sights. There were three men, five women, and about a dozen children. Buckley had dismounted, and they were all clinging around him, and tears of joy and delight running down their cheeks. It was truly an affecting sight, and proved the affection which this people entertained for Buckley. I was much affected at the sight myself, and considered it a convincing proof of the happy results which would follow our exertions if properly directed.

"Among the number was a little old man and an old woman, one of his wives. Buckley told me that this was his old friend, with whom he had lived and associated thirty years. I was much surprised to find this old man had not a blanket; and I inquired the cause, and was much concerned to learn that no blanket had been given him, because he did not leave that part of the country and proceed to Doutagalla for it. I could ill spare my blankets for him, but I could not refrain from giving one of them to Buckley, in order that he might give it to his friends, with an assurance that he should have further clothing after our return.

"The men seemed much surprised at the horses. I, however, after some little persuasion, induced the youngest man to put his foot in the stirrups and mount my grey mare; and I led the horse round a few paces, to the great delight of the whole party. I then coaxed the mare, put my face to hers, to shew that they need not be afraid, and then prevailed upon a young girl, about thirteen years of age, also to have a ride. As soon as the horse began to move, she seemed very much alarmed, and her countenance bespoke her fears, but she continued silent. We gave them a few presents, and then left them to proceed on our journey. I may here mention that, as soon as Buckley crossed the Saltwater River, and obtained a view of his own country, his countenance was much changed; and when we reached Geelong, he took the lead and kept us upon a trct. He seemed much delighted and proud of his horse. When we quitted the natives, we directed our course to the head of the Barwon River."

"Feb. 6. We started this morning about seven o'clock, and when we reached the marsh we saw Geelong harbour, and ascertaining the distance of the harbour at the neck was not more than four miles, we continued our course upon some high land, until we reached the junction of the Yallack and Barwon Rivers. We then descended into a marsh on the Yallack, left our horses there, crossed the Yallack by a native track, over a large tree, and went across the Barwon, to a spot called Buckley's Falls. We found a large basin, and the river somewhat resembled the cataract and basin at Launceston, but upon a smaller scale. Buckley showed us the hollow tree in which he used to live, and the places where they used to catch the fish in the winter season."

In another place we shall have again to refer to Mr. Gellibrand and his lamented death in the bush.

Buckley evidently wished it to be understood by his early white friends that, in leaving the forest for civilised life, he left no ties behind him. One thing is certain, that he never afterwards seemed to sympathise with, or even recognise, either wife or child. He might never have owned one, so far as his manner before Europeans was concerned. Whether ashamed, then, of his former connections, or whether his indifference arose from his natural reserve and even timidity of disposition, we know not. It is singular, however, that though Mr. Wedge should be so informed on his first interview with Buckley

Digitized by Google

as to write that he "has no children, either legitimate or illegitimate," he should subsequently be obliged to say, "He has since pointed out to me a woman that he says is his daughter."

An interesting tradition of this Wild White Man's forest career is preserved in the colony. A cave, situated near Queenscliffe, towards the Heads of Port Phillip Bay, is pointed out as Buckley's Cave, in which he long resided with at least one lubra of his choice. Several of the primitive settlers have informed us that they knew one, two, or more of his wives.

As to his progeny, there are more tales among the whites of the period. A retired miltary captain gave us a long and interesting account of one Mrs. Scarborough, so-called—a tall, handsome woman, universally regarded as a daughter of Buckley's. Mr. Sutherland assured us he knew of two fine-looking young women, also reputed daughters. Dr. Ross, in 1836, refers to at least one daughter living in Port Phillip. Some have spoken of sons. Mr. Batman's eldest daughter told us that the man had several children.

From poor Simon, belonging to a tribe on the Yarra Yarra,—a son, too, of one of the celebrated friends of Batman, Jagga Jagga,—we learned the aboriginal story of Buckley. Asking him if he knew any children of the Wild White Man, we ascertained that he had been acquainted with his son "long time ago." Wishing to know the age of the person then, we got this reply, "plenty one big beard, all the same me." Mr. Gardiner, a highly respectable authority, saw a tall, handsome girl, in 1837, evidently a half-caste, whom he with others concluded to be a daughter of the stranger. Mr. Fawkner, in a letter to the *Chronicle*, in 1836, without referring to children, has a notice of his wives:—"He loved his ease, had travelled but little, and was cheerfully supported by his two *gins*, or, in other words, by two of the female aborigines."

An old bushman, whom we met tending sheep under the shade of Mount Sturgeon, of the Australian Grampians, who declared that he knew "all about that rum fellow," wished to make it appear to us that he had at one time five lubras and a lot of children. Then, we have a published letter of the founder of Melbourne, Mr. John Pascoe Fawkner, jun., dated May, 1837, in which it is stated that Buckley has "several wives among the natives, and a great number of children." Buckley himself, when in Van Diemen's Land, denied the family.

Having thus brought forward his declaration, with the assertions and opinions of others, upon this interesting point of private history, we leave the readers to form their own conclusions as to his domestic life in the bush. We have, however, the admission of the overlander, Mr. McKillop, another acquaintance of Buckley's, in a letter dated 15th July, 1836, that "he was particularly cautious not to give the least occasion to create the slightest feeling of jealousy with the males as to his conduct with the females."

Having now closed the account of his residence with the natives, we proceed to state how he came to forsake his dark friends, and once more to associate with his countrymen.

The south-eastern shore of New Holland was first observed by Mr. Flinders, when, as a midshipman, in company with a young surgeon, Mr. Bass, he rounded Cape Howe in a small whale-boat, in 1797. Western Port was entered on 4th January, 1798, by the enterprising sailors. Capt. Grant, in the *Lady Nelson*, first sailed along the whole extent of the Port Phillip shore in December, 1800. Lieut. Murray, in the same little craft, first entered the beautiful bay of Port Phillip, in February, 1802. Capt. Flinders, accompanied by the renowned Franklin as a midshipman, visited the same place in April, 1802, and wrote the first full description of that lovely country, which subsequently, from its wonderful beauty and fertility, received from Major Mitchell the appellation of AUSTRALIA FELIX.

For a number of years nothing was known of the interior, and none but the adventurous Sealer visited its shores. But, in spite of the ill-success attending its attempted colonisation in 1803, and another attempt at Western Port in 1826, the fancy of colonists in Van Diemen's Land pictured a land of pasture across the Straits for their increasing flocks. Stray tidings came from time to time of sailors who had gone inland, and who had there seen grass as tall as themselves, with downs of surpassing richness, and soft, voluptuous airs, like gentle zephyrs wafted from the fabled "Isles of the Blest."

The land, too, belonged to no one. The ocean separated it from Tasmania, and New South Wales was far enough away from it. It was open to occupation. Nomadic chiefs, like Abraham of old, might go and take up for their flocks and herds a country, where by inheritance they had not so much as to set their foot on.

Yet some difficulties existed. They had but recently in the little island suffered from a furious, bloody warfare with the aborigines, and the lonely squatter would naturally hesitate at plunging into another country without protection, and his flocks exposed to the predatory attacks of barbarians, while

Digitized by Google

the lives of his servants and himself would be in constant jeopardy.

But a few were determined to try a settlement there. They were chiefly men of position and character, and their leaders were as chivalrously interested in the fate of the unknown aborigines as desirous of mere worldly gain. They would, they said, be no rude invaders of the soil, but would rather, by honest treaty and payment, obtain occupation of the land. To this end, the Association sent over John Batman to report upon the El Dorado, and to negotiate, if possible, some satisfactory arrangement with the tribes.

John Batman, always a friend to the dark race, was a bold and dashing hunter, an experienced and enterprising bushman, and a shrewd intelligent colonist. Accompanied by three white men and seven Sydney blacks, he anchored in Port Phillip Bay, on Friday, May 29th, 1835. He met with the natives, frankly, fearlessly, kindly made known to them by signs more than words his intention to settle among them: and then he formed his celebrated treaty with them; which, though disallowed by the British Government, will ever stand as a memorial of the honest dealings of Tasmanian colonists with the natives of Port Phillip. For particulars of this remarkable transaction we must refer the reader to the author's "Discovery and Settlement of Port Phillip."

Having accomplished his mission, he left some men behind upon Indented Head, to hold possession and to cultivate some ground, while he went back to report to Governor Arthur and arrange for the transfer of flocks across Bass's Strait.

It was to these men thus left in charge that Buckley made himself known, on the 12th July, 1835. One of these parties at least was well known to us. But oral testimony, especially from the uneducated, is at the best but uncertain guidance for the historian; and desiring, as we honestly do, to give as clear an account to the public as we can of this interesting portion of Colonial Chronicles, we shall sacrifice the pleasure of continuity of story, to the less satisfactory course of irregular and fragmentary statements.

We shall first bring forward the most authentic account, as well as the earliest one. This, the only official one, is that by Mr. Wedge, formerly an officer of the Van Diemen's Land Government, and now a highly esteemed Legislator of the colony. As he arrived in Port Phillip in July, 1835, he saw Buckley a *few days after* he had appeared to the Englishmen, got the story fresh from all parties, and wrote off particulars to the Governor at Hobart Town, who thought them so important as to forward them to the London Home Office. This is an extract from that document, which takes the very kindest views of the hero of our tale.

"He (Buckley) describes the natives as cannibals, rude and barbarous in their customs, but well disposed towards the white man. He was unable to introduce among them any essential improvements, feeling that his safety depended on his conforming exactly to all their habits and customs. Although he was always anxious to return to civilised life, he had for many years abandoned all hopes of so doing. The following circumstance, however, eventually restored him to his countrymen. Two natives, residing at the establishment left by Mr. Batman, had stolen an axe, and having by others been assured that the theft would be severely punished, they absconded, and eventually fell in with Buckley, communicated to him the fact of white men living in the neighbourhood, and their reason for running away; also saying that they would procure other natives, and return and spear the white men. Buckley succeeded in dissuading them from this outrage, and proceeded in search of Mr. Batman's party, and in two days succeeded in joining them. The Europeans were living in a miserable hut, with several native families encamped around them. On being observed, Buckley caused great surprise, and indeed some alarm; his gigantic stature, his height being nearly six feet six inches, enveloped in a kangaroo skin rug; his long beard and hair of thirty-three years' growth, together with his spears, shields, and clubs, it may readily be supposed presenting a most extraordinary appearance.

"The Europeans believed him to be some great chief, and were in no little trepidation as to his intentions being friendly or not. Buckley proceeded at once to the encampments, and seated himself among the natives, taking no notice of the white men, who, however, quickly detected, to their great astonishment the features of an European; and after considerable difficulty, succeeded in learning who he was. He could not in the least express himself in English; but after the lapse of ten or twelve days, he was able to speak with tolerable fluency, though he frequently inadvertently used the language of the natives. The family with whom Buckley so long resided were greatly attached to him, and bitterly lamented his leaving them."

For some time, according to Mr. Wedge, he was at least peculiar in intellect; for "on being asked questions, he only repeated them."

That gentleman supplementing his account by other old documents which he kindly

Digitized by Google

forwarded to us for reference, we found among these a statement relative to the assumed contemplated attack upon the whites, which runs thus: "Buckley dissuaded them from making the attempt, stating that there were a great many white men where they came from, and that if any of the white men were killed, numbers would come and kill every black man they could find. Thus intimidated they abandoned their intentions."

If, in the course of our investigations, we detect inconsistencies in the various accounts given by Buckley of himself, we must impute them less to dishonesty than stupidity. Whatever he may have been originally, in point of intelligence, his abode for thirty years amongst savages was not calculated to strengthen his mental powers.

But it is odd that some of his tribe should have been quite domesticated with the whites on Indented Head, and for weeks he be unconscious of their presence. It might be supposed that so extraordinary a visit would be very early noted to their white brother, especially when the silent man so seldom strayed from home. The opportunity for conveying such intelligence extended over a period of about two months. He gave the Europeans to understand that he came merely to give that intelligence which should save them from destruction. Mr. Thomson, and other early settlers, doubt the truth of this assertion. Then it seems, instead of trying to make himself known to them, he was first interrogated by the men, who recognised his colour and features as differing from the others.

The next description, in order of time, is that of Mr. Fawkner's, sent over to a colonial paper in 1836. As Buckley and he were never friends, the information here presented was obtained from some of Mr. Batman's men, and is certainly the same as we obtained from one of the same parties. It runs thus:—

"He stood six feet five inches in his stockings, was not very bulky, nor overburdened with *nous*. He fell to the level of the blacks; he did not by any means elevate or raise them, or instruct them in any manner. When Buckley first joined the whites at Indented Head, he had totally forgotten his mother tongue; and the first word he spoke in it was in reply to a desire of one J. Green, whether he would not have some bread to eat, he struggled some time, and then pronounced the word 'bread.'"

Some years ago, in the course of our pursuit of colonial traditions, while seeking after oldest inhabitants, we fell in with a most interesting octogenarian; one who, as he told us, "had helped Wellington to conquer the world." He had amused himself by writing an autobiography, and permitted us not only to read the same, but to copy some parts, reserving the saving clause, of "not to take too much of it." Fearful of detracting from the interest of the old warrior's statement, we prefer giving it after his own fashion. It may be stated that when between fifty and sixty years of age he had the misfortune to attract the notice of some home court, which occasioned his removal to a certain island in the Southern Ocean, then abounding in institutions of a supposed reformatory character. After awhile, being emancipated from the first stage of confinement, he was allowed to go over to Port Phillip at the end of 1835, in charge of some sheep belonging to some Van Diemen's Land gentlemen. While there he became acquainted with Buckley, concerning whom he has the following remarkable, and we believe truthful record:—

"Mr. Batman's men looked at him, and thought he resembled a white man. One of them went up to him to examine him, found two letters on his arm, and saying, 'W for William, and B for Burges,' but never hit on William Buckley. He never spoke; but at last, hearing the English tongue pronounced so often, he burst out, and said, 'W for William, and B for Buckley.' Then they knew that he was an Englishman; then Mr. Batman had him taken from thence, and clothed him, and had him shaved and cleaned; he could scarce walk in shoes for awhile; he was asked what became of the other two, he would never tell, but said they whent away, and suposed they got killed. He was asked how he had lived with the blacks so many years, but would scarse say anything; if any one would ask him any qoestions concerning himself and the blacks, you must have question and answer both one time. He did say that he was ten years that he did not know one day from another; that they would not kill him; some was for killing him and some not for killing him, but he said the oldist blacks saved him."

Twenty years after the event Mr. Morgan gave the following version of the story, professing to obtain the facts from Buckley himself just before his decease. "After stating that the natives met Buckley, and told him "they were in search of another tribe, to enable those left behind to murder the white people more easily, and by so doing to get possession of their property," he informs us that the bloody project was stayed by his telling them to wait a little longer, when a much larger and finer collection of goods would arrive to divide among them. How he got them to believe that tale when, as yet, he had never seen the strangers, does

Digitized by Google

not so easily appear. He walked, it is said, fifteen miles to warn his countrymen, though several days after he had got the tidings of the conspiracy. The rest is then told in the language of the assumed autobiography, and certainly approximates to the truth.

"Whilst sitting in deep thought, musing over these matters, I saw one of the white men take a bucket and go with it to a well some way off, and when he had left it with his load I went there also, in order gradually to recover my senses, and act upon my ultimate determination, whatever it might be.

"From the well I had a good view of all around me, and observed that the natives had pitched their tents near those of the white men; the former being seated round their fires, evidently in great excitement. Presently some of the natives saw me, and turning round, pointed me out to one of the white people, and seeing they had done so, I walked away from the well, up to their place, and seated myself there, having my spears and other war and hunting implements between my legs. The white men could not make me out; my half-caste colour, and extraordinary height and figure, dressed or rather undressed as I was, completely confounded them as to my real character. At length one of them came up and asked me some questions which I could not understand; but when he offered me bread, calling it by its name, a cloud appeared to pass from over my brain, and I soon repeated that and other English words after him. Somehow or other I soon made myself understood to them as not being a native born, and so the white men took me to their tents, and clothed me, giving me biscuit, tea, and meat; and they were indeed all very kind in every way. My sensations I cannot describe; and as I could not describe them in my mother tongue, I showed the initials "W. B." on one of my arms, by which they began readily to sympathise and look upon me as a long-lost castaway seaman, and treated me accordingly, by giving me well-cooked meat, shelter, and raiment. Word by word I began to comprehend what they said, and soon understood as if by instinct, that they intended to remain in the country; that they had seen several of the native chiefs, with whom, as they said, they had exchanged all sorts of things for land."

This account is, on the whole, pretty correct, according to tradition, although Buckley is made to commit the slight blunder of saying that the natives pitched their tents, when his thirty years' experience should have taught him leafy gunyahs were not canvas homes. He speaks just as incorrectly about the *tents* of the Englishmen. Mr. Wedge, there at the very time Buckley was with them, says they were living in a *hut*. But it is idle to criticise a document prepared with the best intentions by its kind-hearted author.

The last version of this oft-repeated tale we obtained from our worthy friend, Simon Jagga Jagga. He was but a picaninny when Buckley left Port Phillip, but he had heard his father and others speak of him. His tribe, living about Melbourne quarter, had no connection with that about Geelong, with whom the white man sojourned. He had got hold of the idea that Buckley was one day found sleeping at the foot of a tree—that the natives could not induce him to eat for a long while—that when he began to speak he talked in black-fellows' language—that in this way they knew he was one of their lost friends returned from death to forest life—and that they, from that time, protected him, and gave him some wives.

Soon after he had become associated with Europeans, Buckley began to betray some uneasiness about his civil condition. He was still, in the eyes of the law, a prisoner, and, what was worse, a runaway prisoner. He opened his mind upon the subject to his friends. Mr. Wedge, never expecting any difficulty to arise, endeavoured to allay his apprehensions. But the quiet, timid man was not to be convinced, and urged the presentation of a petition to his Excellency the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, though it was not then decided under whom the new territory of Port Phillip was to be placed, whether under that officer or the Governor at Sydney.

We now lay before the reader a copy of the petition prepared by Mr. Wedge, with other documents connected with the event, and interesting, from thus illustrating, not only the life of Buckley, but the early days of the magnificent colony of Victoria.

"The Humble Petition of William Buckley, to His Excellency Colonel George Arthur, Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land, sheweth—

"That your Petitioner was a private in the Cheshire Supplementary Militia about two years, when he volunteered into the 4th Regiment of Foot, or King's Own, of which regiment he was attached to the third Battallion, and continued therein between two and three years, during which time he accompanied that regiment in the expedition to Holland.

"That your Petitioner was afterwards convicted of receiving stolen property, and was transported for life.

"That your Petitioner arrived at Port Phillip, New Holland, about thirty years ago, and on the breaking up of the establishment your Petitioner with two others (the name of one of whom was William Marmon) ab-

Digitized by Google

sconded and subsisted on the sea coast for about twelve months, when he fell in with a family of natives, with whom he has continued up to the present time. That your Petitioner has, at various times, suffered great privations from the want of food.

"That your Petitioner, previously to his joining the natives, returned to Port Phillip, with the intention of surrendering himself to the authorities, but was prevented from doing so by the departure of the establishment.

"That your Petitioner has never seen a white man since that period, until he came to the establishment formed by Mr. Batman, Mr. Wedge, and other gentlemen, on the — July, 1835.

"That your Petitioner, two days previously to joining the establishment, learnt from two natives that white men were in the neighbourhood, and that they with others intended to spear them, for the sake of the plunder they would get.

"That your Petitioner remonstrated with them, and dissuaded them from their intentions; that your Petitioner has ever since exerted himself and has succeeded in convincing them of the friendly disposition of the white men towards the natives.

"That your Petitioner will continue to do all in his power to render permanent the good understanding that has been established, for which services your Petitioner humbly prays for the indulgence of a Free Pardon, and your Petitioner will ever pray."

Letter from Mr. Wedge, at Port Phillip, to the Colonial Secretary, accompanying the petition:—

"Sir,—In reference to the petition of William Buckley for a free pardon, which I have the honour to transmit herewith, I beg to bear testimony to the essential service he has rendered in becoming the means of communication with the natives, and I have no hesitation in saying that through him there is every probability of making permanent the friendly intercourse that was commenced by Mr. Batman in his recent excursion (already detailed by that gentleman to the Government) with the aborigines; and from the fact of his having saved the lives of the eight men who were left here by Mr. Batman, together with the circumstance of his having made a voluntary offer of becoming in future the medium of communication with the aborigines. I beg most earnestly to recommend his petition to the favourable consideration of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor; and in doing so, I feel that I scarcely need advert to the danger that would ensue to the lives of those who may in future reside here, by his being driven to despair by the refusal of his petition, which would probably induce him to join the natives again; and in which event there is no calculating on the mischief that might ensue by the hostile feelings that he would have it in his power to instil into the breasts of the natives. I doubt not, as an act of humanity toward those who may come to sojourn in this settlement, the above circumstance will have weight in the consideration his Excellency will bestow on the prayer of the petition. If I might be allowed, I would respectfully suggest that it should at once be conceded to him, and his free pardon sent by the next vessel that will be despatched to this place. Buckley is a most interesting character; from his long residence amongst the natives, he has acquired a great influence over them as well as all their habits and language; in fact, he had nearly forgotten his native tongue, and it was some days before he could express himself in it. The two men who absconded with him left him before he joined the natives; and he has never heard of them since; he supposes they were killed by them. Buckley is gigantic in size, measuring six feet five inches and seven-eighths without shoes, and of good proportions; and I have no doubt he is indebted for his life to his ferocious appearance. From the circumstance of his having been obliged to direct the whole of his attention to self-preservation and to procuring food for subsistence, his memory has almost altogether failed him as to time and events which occurred previous to his leaving England. He forgets the name of the vessel he came in, as well as that of the captain and the commandant of the settlement. From his information, the natives are in the lowest grade of ignorance, having no idea of a Supreme Being; and although I have had but a short intercourse with them, I am inclined to give credence to his statement, and I have acquired sufficient confidence in them to trust myself amongst them in excursions into the interior. I went about twelve miles with them yesterday. I have, &c.

"JOHN H. WEDGE.

"To Captain Montagu, Colonial Secretary."

Then follows the usual prison description of his person.

"Description of William Buckley:—Height, without shoes, six feet five inches and seven-eights; age, fifty-three; trade, bricklayer; complexion, brown; head round; hair, dark brown; visage, round, and marked with smallpox; forehead, low; eyebrows, bushy; eyes, hazel; nose, pointed and turned up; native place, Marton, near Macclesfield, Cheshire.

"REMARKS.—Well proportioned, with an erect military gait; mermaid on upper part of right arm; sun, half-moon, seven stars, monkey; W. B. on lower part of right arm.

"JOHN H. W."

Digitized by Google

To this appeal from Port Phillip there came a prompt and favourable reply from Governor Arthur.

"Van Diemen's Land,
"Colonial Secretary's Office.

"Sir,—Having submitted to the Lieutenant-Governor your letter of the 9th July last, enclosing a petition from William Buckley, a runaway convict recently discovered at Port Phillip, after having been for some years domesticated with the natives of that part of the coast of New Holland; and, his Excellency having considered the subject of your representation of this man's conduct, and the services he has rendered in promoting a friendly disposition between the aborigines with whom he has been so long time associated, and the whites who have recently visited the coast of New Holland, I am directed to acquaint you that the Lieutenant-Governor is doubtful how far he is authorised to grant a free pardon to William Buckley, as he is not within the jurisdiction of this Government; but his Excellency has, notwithstanding, acquiesced in the preparation of the usual instrument, in the hope that, from considerations of policy, the indulgence will be acceded to by his Majesty's Government.

"I am further desired to inform you that the Lieutenant-Governor's compliance with your request in this case is founded upon a desire to prevent bloodshed, and with a view to remove any inducement on Buckley's part to make common cause with the natives in the commission of any outrages upon the white immigrants, which might lay the foundation of a war of extermination; and his Excellency also entertains the sanguine expectation that, if this man's energies and influence be well directed, the aborigines may be so thoroughly conciliated as to insure a lasting amity between them and the present or any future immigrants to that part of the coast of New Holland.

"I am further to signify the desire of his Excellency that it may be distinctly understood that the reasons stated in this letter form the only grounds for the present concession, which must not be construed into the admission of any claim made by the gentlemen associated with Mr. Batman to the territory at Port Phillip, or any part thereof. I have the honour to be, Sir, your very obedient servant,

"John Montagu.

"25th August, 1835."

Mr. Wedge, as in duty bound, acknowledged this favour, although he did not do so until his return to his Tasmanian home, at Leighland, near Ross:—

"Leighland, 15th October, 1835.

"Sir,—I had the honour of receiving your letter, accompanied with the free pardon for William Buckley, which was forwarded to me at Port Phillip.

"In acknowledging the receipt of them, I beg to express the obligations I am under for the humane and prompt attention paid by the Lieutenant-Governor to my representation of Buckley's case; and I am especially directed by him to convey his thanks to his Excellency for his free pardon, and also his assurance that he will do all in his power to perpetuate the friendly understanding with the natives that was so fortunately established through the treaty effected by Mr. Batman in June last; and it is with much satisfaction that I can state, from the observations I had an opportunity of making, whilst residing among them, that there is every chance of the continuance of the good understanding, provided a proper system be observed in our future intercourse.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

"John H. Wedge."

There appears to have been some honest, good-tempered jealousy between the real friends of the Wild White Man and his black friends, Messrs. Batman and Wedge, respecting the part each took in procuring this indulgence. In a letter of Mr. Wedge's to Mr. Batman, dated October 14th, 1835, a gentle complaint issues in these words:—"I could not shut my eyes or be deaf to the remark you made respecting Buckley's obtaining his pardon through your influence with the Lieutenant-Governor. A very few minutes after your brother had perused your letter, he remarked to Buckley that it was very fortunate that you happened to be in Hobart Town at the time the memorial arrived there, that you had waited on the Governor, and obtained his free pardon, and giving him to understand that it was through your influence alone that Colonel Arthur conceded to the prayer of the petitioner; and as your words the other afternoon were almost the echo of his (your brother's), I cannot do otherwise than suppose that what he stated was from your instructions. If the pardon was through your influence every credit is due to you for it, and no one would feel under greater obligations to you than myself. If, on the other hand, you assume that which I consider emanated entirely from the correct and humane view which the Lieutenant-Governor took of the representation that was made by me, I do not think it fair toward others of the proprietors who may reside at Dutagalla, for it certainly looks as though you intended to get the whole credit to yourself, and by which to obtain an undue influence over the mind of Buckley, and through him over the minds of the natives."

Digitized by Google

We think the good man's fears unduly excited. Without doubt Mr. Wedge's letter was the official means of favour to poor Buckley, while it is equally evident that the kind offices of Mr. Batman were not wanting at the private ear of the Governor. The pardon came from Colonel Arthur, August 25th, 1835.

In a official report from Mr. Wedge, addressed to the Governor, and dated Feb., 1836, we read this passage about Buckley :— "He resides at present at the settlement formed by the gentlemen who have associated to form a new colony, through the means of the friendly interest which has been here established. He expresses his intention of remaining at present, for the purpose of being the medium of communication with the natives. On his receiving the conditional pardon which his Excellency the Governor most humanely and promptly forwarded to him, on his case being made known, and hearing of the meritorious assistance he had afforded the settlers, he was most deeply affected; and nothing could exceed the joy he evinced at once more feeling himself a free man, received again within the pale of civilised society."

This gentleman, in fact, was for some time the friend and apologist of Buckley, until convinced, like others, that no use could be made of him. He even framed some excuse for his utter negligence of civilisation, or contempt for its observance. "For an individual," says he, "situated as was Buckley, to conciliate the natives, he must conform to their customs; if they hunt, he must hunt with them, and he must participate in all their pastimes. If their condition is to be ameliorated, it must be accomplished by numbers, and by the force of example; becoming acquainted with the comforts of civilisation may be likely to lead them to be desirous of partaking thereof." Mr. Protector Thomas took no such charitable view when he wrote:—"Buckley was more ignorant than the blacks, and perfectly useless to them, quite a different man to Rutherford, who lived many years with the New Zealanders, and who was a shrewd, active fellow."

At first Buckley hung about the settlements with no idea of making himself generally useful, or caring to enter into any of the trading views of the times. Every idea of the commercial was for ever driven from his mind. The only use made of him, according to Nathaniel Goslyn, was that Mr. Batman put up "a place for him at the end of a small store that he might keep the blacks from robbing him."

Great things were expected from him, without doubt, though he miserably failed even to attempt to please his friends. Knowing really little of the country, he was unable to indicate sites for good runs. Timid and unenergetic, he was of no use with the natives. Mr. Fawkner's idea was that the pet Associationists of Port Phillip, with whose interests Colonel Arthur was supposed to be identified, and who certainly were Buckley's earliest and best of friends, hoped through his advocacy to secure great ends with the aborigines. The original Melbourne settler thus expresses his mind: "The Governor Arthur party, when news arrived that this runaway had been found, showered favours innumerable upon him; first, in order to obtain all the information that he possessed; and also to prevail upon him not to give any part of his local knowledge to those persons not belonging to the co-partners. Alas! the *lump of matter* was too *mindless* to yield any very useful information."

Mr. Gellibrand, particularly, took much pains to make what use he could of him. He did hope to learn something of good pastures; he did hope to keep the natives quiet through him; he did hope to raise them to some civilised condition through his instrumentality: he was deceived in all his expectations. He clothed him comfortably, and got him a horse to ride on, besides securing him a salary. Goslyn tells us: "Then, what few settlers there were subscribed and bought a horse, saddle, and bridle—cost sixty guineas—and going to give him sixty pounds a year, for to ride amongst the blacks and tell them what the white people would do for them if they would be quiet." Another "Old Hand" told us that Buckley, when so nominally employed, lived in his hut on the Werribee River. He evidently regarded him as a lazy and ungrateful man, for he assured us that though by agreement Buckley was bound to ride from station to station for three or four days a week, yet he rarely went away but one day in a week, lounging idly about the rest of the time.

But let us hear Mr. Gellibrand himself, by giving another extract from his interesting little *Port Phillip Journal*:—

"Feb. 1. I have this morning had a long conversation with Buckley, and explained to him very fully the desire of the Association in every respect to meet his views, and to make him superintendent over the native tribes, for the purposes of protecting them from aggressions; and also acting as an interpreter, in imparting to them not only the habits of civilisation, but also of communicating religious knowledge. It appears from his statement that the tribes are most peaceably disposed; that they fully understand the nature of the grants issued by them; and that they are looking forward to the time

Digitized by Google

when the blankets, tomahawks, and flour will be distributed.

"Buckley appears to be of a nervous and irritable disposition, and that a little thing will annoy him very much; but this may arise from the peculiar situation in which he has been placed for so many years. I am quite satisfied that he can be only acted upon by kindness and conciliation, and that by those means he will be an instrument, in the hands of Providence, in working a great moral change upon the aborigines. He is not at all desirous of occupying land and having sheep, but is highly pleased with the idea of being appointed superintendent of the natives, with a fixed stipend; so that, to use his own expression, 'he may know what he has to depend upon, and be enabled to make a few presents to his native friends.'"

Armed with this authority from the Association, and sworn in, as he had previously been, a constable, by Captain Lonsdale, the police magistrate of Melbourne and only representative of government in those infant days, Buckley might have been calculated upon by some as the means of preventing some evil, if not effecting much good. But even before this, from the period of the arrival of successive streams of flocks and shepherds, he had been placed in circumstances of great difficulty. Although, to the regret and even displeasure of the natives, he had attached himself to the whites and ceased to roam with the tribes, he could be no unobservant spectator, taciturn and indifferent as he seemed, of the effects of the occupation of this new country by a new and arrogant race.

He knew the laws of the dark race, the distinctness of boundaries, and the jealousy of intrusion upon hunting grounds. He was equally conscious of the overbearing character of Europeans towards aborigines—their contempt of their persons—their disregard of assumed rights—their conviction that whatever they could seize of a savage land was their own, and their feeling that everywhere the blacks must retire before them, though it was to a speedy grave. However bound by blood, and interest, too, to the whites, the influence of thirty long years could not but bring his sympathies to his forest friends. He naturally expected that the antagonism of position between such opposite parties must quickly and inevitably produce dispute and bloodshed. If a native took a woolly kangaroo feeding upon his pastures, the owner of that sheep would soon retaliate. Should threatening words only come at first, the gun would quickly furnish another argument. Blood for blood would be the cry from the hut of the shepherd and the wirlie of the aborigine.

There was another question more likely to cause disturbance than the robbing of flocks; and that was, the treatment of the native women. The men of the bush were mostly rough fellows, who had, from certain peculiar antecedents, been compelled to serve the State in a neighbouring island for a certain term. The country was too fresh and unsettled for European women to enter, and it was to be feared that where bribes did not avail to ensure obedience to men's wild desires, force would be employed with lubras.

How, then, it might be said, was Buckley to act? To show that this might have been expected, we give an extract from the Hobart Town *Colonial Times* of March, 1836, a few months only after the first sheep were landed in the country:—

"Some *Barkers*, it is reported, after having committed the grossest outrage upon some native women, killed two of them, and wounded several others, whom, with the murdered bodies, the natives having assembled in great numbers were (when the latest accounts came away) proceeding to the headquarters of the company to demand satisfaction. The natives are said to be of a determined and resolute character, and were not reconciled at all to the mere glossing over, on the part of the squatters, of a diabolical outrage, committed a short time previous to the last occurrence by three stockkeepers on a native woman." The same paper, in April, explains a portion of this story:—"About two months ago a report was brought to the settlement of Port Phillip by some men employed by Mr. Griffiths in collecting bark; and about the middle of last month the parties so wounded were brought to the settlement, not for the purpose of demanding satisfaction, but for protection."

The kind-hearted Mr. Gellibrand was much affected at a case of the kind that came under his own notice. As the offender was a servant of the company of which he was the recognised head, the fellow was immediately discharged and sent back to Van Diemen's Land. He then employed Buckley to explain the circumstances to the indignant tribe, and to assure them that attention should at all times be given to their complaints. This is the worthy gentleman's tale:—

"Feb. 15. Upon my arrival at the settlement I found about one hundred and fifty natives, and I learned with much concern that an aggression had been committed upon one of the women, which required my immediate attention. Without waiting to refresh myself, or refit, I proceeded to the native huts, and ordered the person. . . . (an omission in the manuscript) a violent contusion upon the back part of her head, and which I understood had been inflicted upon

Digitized by Google

her by her husband. It appears that the tribe had lately been to the Saltwater River, and near the shepherd's hut, No. 10; that this woman was proceeding toward the settlement to see her mother, and fell in with one of the shepherds, who laid hold of her, brought her to the hut, tied her hands behind her, and kept her there all night. The natives are particularly jealous respecting their women, and they consider any intercourse of this kind as a contamination, and in every case punish the women fearfully, even to death. The natives—men, women, and children—assembled around me. I explained to them, through Buckley, our determination in every instance to punish the white man, and to protect the natives to the utmost of our power. I then explained to the men the wickedness of their conduct, and how justly they would be punished if the natives had inflicted an injury upon them."

The uneasy feeling of the aborigines at the singular and rapid absorption of their hunting grounds increased, till outrages of a painful character disturbed the lonely and peaceful vales of Australia Felix. We must direct the reader to another part of the work for more particulars of these conflicts. A notice of two incidents of early colonial history is necessary here, as Buckley's good name suffered in connection with them.

The particulars of the first we prefer giving in the words of the venerable founder of Melbourne. In his letter contained in the *Hobart Town Colonist*, dated from Pascoe Vale, Fawkner's River, April 10th, 1836, Mr. Fawkner says:—

"The natives are not warlike, but are very treacherous. We fear they have killed three white men: one a runaway, who came here from George Town as a free man, and absconded to the woods; and two of Captain Swanston's men, who were bringing provisions to their station from Indented Head. It is thought that the natives mistook this provision to be that which had been promised to them and unjustly withheld; for it appears that a promise had been made to them that provisions should be sent to Indented Head, and there issued, which, up to this, has not been done. The blacks suspected of this murder have absconded from their usual haunts; since this, the other night, one of the blacks has been shot in the back. Buckley, the Crown prisoner that absconded from the *Calcutta* in 1803, says that a native black, by name Baitbianger, was the man that fired this shot. Now this man and another, a chief *from whom with others I bought my land*, live with me, and frequently go out and shoot kangaroos, snakes, &c., for me, but I do not think they could have had any piece from me on that night. I think some other persons did the deed, and now wish to lay it on the blacks that live with me, so that they may attach a share of the blame to me. I am too independent a spirit for some of the squatters. I love too much to see fair play between all persons to please any time-servers. I much fear that the company will have a great deal of trouble to keep off intruders, but much of this will depend upon whom they entrust as managers here."

The reader will detect in the foregoing the symptoms of the opposition existing between the company and the writer of that narrative; as well as a deeply rooted prejudice against Buckley as the servant of the Association.

A more serious event disturbed the settlement soon after. A Mr. Franks, a settler from the little island opposite, and whose family there were known to us, was murdered, together with his shepherd, by the natives. The bodies were found the following day by chance-callers at the station. Mr. Franks had received a blow on the right temple with the back part of a tomahawk, with two severe cuts on the side of his head, which must have caused instant death. The excitement for revenge may be judged when the Launceston *Cornwall Chronicle* published this horrible passage:—"The annihilation of the whole body of Port Phillip natives, in our opinion, would afford an insufficient revenge for the murder of such a man."

The pursuit after the supposed tribe took place. The Blacks of the Yarra, delighted at the opportunity of so bloody a raid against their ancient foes, when helped by the muskets of the English, "solicited," says an authority of the time, "permission from the company to destroy the miscreants."

The sequel may be briefly given from the *News*, of 6th August:—"The avenging party fell upon the guilty tribe, about daylight in the morning, having watched them from the previous night, and putting into effect a preconcerted plan of attack, succeeded in annihilating them." The Hobart Town *Colonial Times*, a faithful friend of the oppressed, thus expressed its indignation upon this slaughter:—"Men who stand up so pertinaciously for their *own* liberty of the subject, most barbarously annihilated a whole tribe, because three of its number were *suspected* of having destroyed two of their foreign intruders."

With what feelings but of uneasy displeasure could Buckley have heard of these frightful scenes! He could not but sympathise with the unhappy victims. But he acted unworthily in displaying such unconcern at the funeral of the poor settler. We were assured by one present on that occasion, that, as the procession passed by, Buckley, who was

Digitized by Google

standing near Mr. Batman's smithy, laughed aloud. Others saw the same indecorum, and a universal sentiment of disgust toward him took possession of the public mind. A Port Phillip correspondent of the *Cornwall Chronicle* places his conduct in the strongest light, and betrays the animus of a partisan :—

"I must take upon myself here to observe the disgraceful conduct of the monster Buckley ; when the bodies of Mr. Franks and his men were brought to the settlement, he objected to their being placed in his hut ; he did not attend the funeral, and was observed, as it passed, laughing at the truly melancholy procession. He did not assist the parties who immediately had gone out in search of the murderers ; and it is generally believed by his best friends, namely, 'The Company,' that he is at the bottom of all the mischief that has taken place in the new colony, and unless he be speedily removed, I very much dread the results, he having already threatened to join the natives."

This idea of desertion and return to the tribes appears to have caused considerable anxiety among the alarmists. That so quiet an individual should all at once display the energy and tact necessary to bring the natives into armed combination against his countrymen seems so absurd, that we should doubt the fact of such an idea abroad did we not find it authenticated in several quarters. We fancy, however, that we can trace through the various reports the same spirit of party contest, which so often gives shape to airy nothings.

A Van Diemen's Land newspaper of July, 1836, ventures upon the following : "The much-talked of Buckley has probably by this time, in accordance with his expressed intentions, taken to the bush, where he possesses absolute control over the natives, and will of course teach them to revenge his wrongs. He has threatened the lives of several of the principals of the establishment, and, savage-like, will be as good as his word."

Again, on 30th July, we read : "Letters have been received by the *Vansittart*, which speak in the most contemptible terms of Buckley, whose conduct is such as to induce most persons to wish him away from the settlement."

Buckley's old enemy Mr. Fawkner, writing about this time, says : "He soon displayed a spirit of antagonism to the whites ; and, in fact, stated one day, when hard pressed, that he should rejoice if the whites could be driven away, he did not care how, so that the aborigines could have the country to themselves again." Even honest old Goslyn, in his autobiography, bears witness to the spread of this prejudice against him, and reports the dissatisfaction with which the benevolent Mr. Gellibrand viewed his character. This is the allusion in the journal : "He said he would sooner go back to them. He said it was the white people's fault. This latter part I heard Mr. Gellibrand say myself—they thought he might go back to them ; then, what mischief he could do."

An old shepherd told us that he heard Mr. Gellibrand in high words with him, and desiring him never to come near his station again. A paper of the day remarks : "It is to be lamented that the progress of civilisation in so fine a country, one so well adapted for sheep and sheep-grazing, should be checked in its growth by the conduct of *one* man, who is more savage than the aborigines with whom he has lived and associated for thirty years."

There were not wanting, however, a few who were not carried away by this absurd rumour. The *News* of 30th July, says that Mr. M'Killop, a much esteemed colonist, "has letters from Port Phillip to the 15th inst., in which no mention is made about Buckley taking to the bush. Indeed, this gentleman states, that Buckley is so strongly impressed with the treachery of the natives, and being a very timid man, having had frequent communications with him, that it is not likely he will ever again join the natives, unless it be for the express purpose to effect a conciliation."

The *Launceston Examiner* of August thus contradicts the assertion :—"The report that Buckley, the Anglo-aboriginal of Port Phillip, had taken to the bush, and had been concerned with the natives in the late murders, is without foundation. Buckley has all along continued to reside with Batman." More than this, we have a paper of the same date, saying :—"Buckley is spoken of by our informant in rather favourable terms. He cautioned the settlers upon their first intercourse with the natives against making too much of them ; stating that they would, if opportunity offered, murder any of the whites for the sake of the articles of food, or of any other description, they might possess."

Ignorance of native manners inclined the early colonists to believe that, because Buckley was seen on good terms with some natives near Indented Head, he would be equally familiar with those on the Melbourne side, fifty or sixty miles distant. But he, knowing the natural jealousy and enmity of tribes, saw himself at once an object of suspicion among the Yarra race, and with all others not of his own friendly people. A man even less timid and reserved would have felt the pressure of such circumstances. But when Buckley was so situated, with prejudices and interests so conflicting, no action

Digitized by Google

could have been expected from him; he fancied he ran the risk of a spear from the blacks, or a broken head from the whites. From the first he urged the settlers not to interfere with the habits of his black acquaintances. Once, when some prying eyes detected in the native bag of a lubra the remains of cooked flesh of a human being, and a fever of indignation arose, he rebuked the curious, and wished them to mind their own business and not put their heads in other people's baskets.

That which brought the popular indignation against Buckley to a climax was his apparent indifference to the fate of his early friend, Mr. Gellibrand.

This gentleman, with a companion, Mr. Hesse, had gone into the interior, during the first year of colonial settlement, with the view of gaining a knowledge of the country. Fears about their prolonged absence induced many of the colonists to organise themselves in parties, for the purpose of searching for the unfortunate gentlemen; or, at least, to discover their remains. Nearly thirty years have passed, and to this hour no satisfactory tale has been told of their fate. It was naturally expected that Buckley would have been the most eager to interest himself in the tracking work. But, alas! for poor human nature, and Buckley's nature especially, he could only, after many solicitations, be induced to accompany an expedition to the Barwon a few miles, when he slunk back in fear, saying it was no use going further.

Mr. Lonsdale, the magistrate of the settlement (for Melbourne was not then christened), saw the necessity of removing the ex-aboriginal constable from the scene, and sent him, at Christmas, 1837, with a letter to the Government of Van Diemen's Land. There he was honoured with a sort of constable porter's place, in which he was at least sure of his rations of provisions, with some small pay, and very little work to do.

When we arrived in Hobart Town, in 1841, we found him gatekeeper at the Female Factory in Liverpool-street. Just before this he had taken to himself, for the first time, and at the ripe age of sixty, a wife of his own colour and nation. She was the widow of an emigrant, left with two children.

We deeply regret our inability to give the reader any satisfactory account of the courtship of our hero. As a man of few words, the bargain would be soon concluded. For the same reason, we do not question that the union was more serene and unclouded than with natures more sensitive and tongues more voluble. Although we often saw the pair wending their way in the middle of the roadway, rather than the path, just taking their evening stroll, we do not remember ever seeing that lofty head lowered to address the little body, who could just hang her fingers on his arm. Gentle and harmless in character, he would, doubtless, in spite of his timidity, incapacity, and reserve, be an object of tender regard and care to the kind heart of a woman.

Time rolled on. Twenty years passed as unheeded by him among his fellow countrymen, as thirty previously with the sable foresters. A pension of twelve pounds was granted by the Tasmanian Government, and a petition procured him forty more from the Council of Victoria. He went on the even tenor of his way amidst the convulsions of colonial society. The commercial tempest of 1842–3 swept over Australia; the Anti-Transportation League stirred the social elements; the trumpet-tongued gold discovery brought the eyes of the world to his old Port Phillip home; but Buckley seemed to know nothing of all, feel nothing, care for nothing.

He was not of us, though with us. What the man really thought in his quiet hours will ever remain a mystery. It may be that the few aspirations he possessed still rested beneath the green trees of Indented Head, and that he inwardly sighed for the tranquil days he spent by the lulling falls of the forest-sheltered Barwon. There, clad in his opossum skin, his food provided by the woods, his nectar in the gurgling stream, he could recline at ease, and dream his idle dreams in unmolested solitude.

An accident, when driven out in a gig, early in 1856, was the immediate cause of his decease. He was buried on the 2nd of February. His age was seventy-six years.

The story of James Morrill, who was with the blacks of North Australia for seventeen years, is a fitting sequel to the tale of William Buckley.

In 1846, the ship *Peruvian* was wrecked on her way to China. A raft conducted seven of the survivors to the shore near Cape Cleveland. Three died before they had been landed a fortnight. The others were then discovered by the blacks. When both sides had recovered their mutual astonishment and alarm, they made each other's acquaintance.

The natives appear to have treated them with kindness and consideration. They expressed by looks their sympathy at their distress, and hastened to place food before them. Indicating their wish to conduct the party inland, they led the way forward, carrying a sickly sailor boy with gentleness and good nature. At the camp our country people were the objects of curiosity and attention, and were paraded before the wondering eyes of friendly neighbours after the

Digitized by Google

Barnum showman fashion, though without a fee of admission.

Separated afterwards in the wandering life of the bush, the boy died near Port Denison, and the captain and his wife followed him to the grave some months after. Morrill was not present at the end of either, but was persuaded of the uniform kindness of the blacks attending them to the last. The exposure to the varying climate, without proper shelter or clothing, produced attacks of rheumatism which hastened their departure. The men, with no change of dress, had been soon compelled to go naked as the blacks; but the English woman maintained some regard to civilised propriety in appearance, so far as the poor creature could obtain the means. Whatever her sufferings in her isolation from European society and comforts, she was spared any indignity or cruelty from the so-called savages.

Within three years from the date of shipwreck, Morrill was left alone with the aborigines.

The very year in which he was thrown upon this north-eastern shore, Leichhardt passed with his gallant company, not a great distance from his retreat, when on his way across the continent to Port Essington. In a few years the flocks of the settlers spread themselves northward from Moreton Bay, till they reached the confines of the country in which Morrill sojourned with the blacks.

At the beginning of the present year he resolved to make himself known to his countrymen, who had established sheep stations as far as the tropics. Why he did not seek them before appears singular to us. He had heard of their approach; and many a tale had been told of conflicts between the gun of the stockman and the spear of the black man. He had evidently the same reluctance to give up his free life in the wilds that had kept Buckley so long apart from the white intruders.

A kangaroo hunt having been got up by the men, Morrill was placed with the women of the tribe on the look-out for the whites, to give warning should any come toward the warriors. The female watchers separated into chattering groups, and the sailor found himself, with one woman only, near a hut of the shepherds. He then disclosed his intention to make himself known to his people. The poor creature, alarmed for his safety from the dreaded bushmen, tried in vain to thwart his intention.

He went to a waterhole, and removed some of the accumulations of preceding years, that he might shadow forth a resemblance to his former white self. Coming to the fence of the sheep-yard, and calling to mind the bit of English he could command, he sang out, "What cheer, shipmate?" Alarmed at this unaccountable salute, one looked out and exclaimed, "Come out and bring the guns, Wilson. Here's a naked man on the fence, that's white or yellow, but not black." Fearing a shot, Morrill found words to say that he was only a shipwrecked seaman.

Received in the hut, he accepted food, but declined clothing, as he intended to return to the tribe. Words so stuck in his throat, as he said, that he could not easily carry on a conversation. It was not without suspicion that the settlers saw him retire from the hut, and a threat of vengeance was uttered in the fear of his proving false.

He returned to his old friends to bid them farewell. They besought him to remain with them, if only to shield them from the violence of the new white neighbours. Earnestly did they tell him to beg of them not to shoot any more; and if they would take the good land, at least to leave them the swamps and saltwater creeks. He promised them to devote his life to their interests.

Like Buckley, he was not over-communicative to his countrymen. The *Rockhampton Bulletin* refers to his interview with the Police Magistrate of that northern settlement, and adds:—"Mr. Gardiner, with unwearied patience, and an exemplary desire to confine his examination to matters of public interest, put a series of questions, intended to draw forth a connected narrative of Morrill's experiences; but the latter, with that reticence customary to those who have long, and, we may add, hopelessly endured suffering, contented himself with monosyllabic replies, and augmented rather than satisfied the thirst of his audience for information."

Morrill hoped for the authority of Government to act as a mediator between the whites and blacks, as Mr. Gellibrand intended Buckley to do. He trusted he should be able to restrain the cupidity of his old friends, and the reckless violence of the settlers. By the last accounts he has failed in his mission. The blacks mistrust the deserter of their camp fires; and the whites threaten him already with deadly hostility for supposed confederation with the natives, to the injury of the flocks.

Digitized by Google

THE BLACKS OF VICTORIA.

INTRODUCTION.

SEVERAL years ago we visited a small party of aborigines camping near our house. There were four of them; old Jemmy, his lubra Mary, an adopted child, and their friend Simon. They had just returned from Melbourne, laden with packets of sugar, and tea, loaves of bread, meat, sardines, &c. The men were clad in European fashion, though without boots and hats. The woman had some under garments, but the dirty blanket enveloped all. The little girl had only the piece of a blanket. Simon was preparing his supper at the fire. Jemmy was drunk and quarrelling with his wife. The child was crying on the damp ground. The poor young half-caste was motherless; her reckless father might, for ought we know, be still tending sheep on the plains, or standing behind a counter in Melbourne.

The dispute which had lulled at our entrance was soon resumed in angry earnestness. We found out it was a family quarrel. Oaths and opprobrious epithets, wanting in his own language, the old man borrowed from the classic tongue of the English. Taking us privately aside, he recounted to us a narrative of wrongs, such as few husbands are called upon to endure. The lady utterly denied everything, and charged her spouse with conjugal improprieties; these he frankly acknowledged, but alleged that such could be no excuse for her own faults. After further talk, as she evidently had the best of the argument, a fire stick was applied to her head to induce sounder convictions. This commenced an attack of so active a nature that we were compelled to interfere, and forcibly hold the avenging arm, while the screaming woman fled in the darkness.

Such was the exhibition of native domestic life, and such the march of improvement from a contact with the civilised white man!

In the meantime, Simon sat silently and stoically by the fire. He was one who had seen Batman at his first celebrated conference with the aborigines. His father Jagga Jagga was an influential and faithful friend to the then humble, weak, and smiling whites. As the last of his family, he now wandered a stranger in the land of his forefathers. He was ill, melancholy, and without hope. He told us that there was not a black child in his tribe; adding in a sad tone, "All blackfellow go away."

We desired to gather a few records of their history, especially as they were when the friends of Buckley, the Wild White Man; and tell the tale to those who show the title deed of lands, for which no adequate return has been given to the right owner, in the faint hope that some justice and kindness will be meeted out to the few natives that remain. There is no shadow of hope of perpetuating the race, or of inducing them to adopt our civilised pursuits. But we may supply their wants, provide them with shelter and attendance when sick, shield them from the licentiousness of their white neighbours, and preserve them from their arch enemy,—*strong drink*.

Digitized by Google

EARLY STORIES OF THE BLACKS.

THE FIRST SETTLEMENT.

Buckley, the Wild White Man, ran away from the English Penal Settlement of Port Phillip at the end of December, 1803; that establishment being removed to the banks of the Derwent, in Van Diemen's Land, a few weeks after his flight. The tribe with whom he found favour, and dwelt for so many years, lived on that coast of the Bay opposite to the prisoners' establishment, and had no association with the whites; from the hostility of the native communities, the Geelong men were not likely even to hear of the arrival of these curious strangers. It was otherwise with those Port Phillip Bay blacks, whose hunting-grounds extended eastward as well as northward of the Port, and who could not avoid knowledge of their wonderful neighbours. We have two sources of information respecting this intercourse: the journal of the Rev. Robert Knopwood, Chaplain to the Settlement, and afterwards the first Chaplain of Hobart Town; and the published work of Lieutenant J. H. Tuckey, of the *Calcutta*, the vessel that brought Governor Collins out to this colony, in 1803.

The notices of our black friends by the clergyman are these:—"October 10. Three natives came to us, and were very friendly." October 22. On that day is entered the intelligence of Gammon and Harris being beset by blacks, and calling upon Lieut. Tuckey to fire. Upon firing over their heads, they all dispersed. But the chief returned, ornamented with a turban crown. Fresh provocations being received, a charge was made. We quote the journal: "Mr. Tuckey fired over them a second time, at which they again retired a short distance. They were in great numbers, and all armed. Finding that none of their party were wounded by the firing, they again advanced; but when one of them was about to throw his spear at Mr. Tuckey, he gave orders to shoot him as an example. Our people fired, and killed him, and another was wounded; on which they all fled. Had not Mr. Tuckey fortunately come up with his boat, there is no doubt but that they would have killed Mr. Gammon and Mr. Harris and their two men, and perhaps have eaten them, for there is great reason to believe they are cannibals."

LIEUTENANT TUCKEY'S NARRATIVE.

This officer informs the reader, that Col. Collins, the Governor, Captain Woodriff, and himself, had an interview with some natives, who "came unarmed to the boats, without the smallest symptom of apprehension." Having to proceed toward the head of the Port in boats, the lieutenant on duty found himself surrounded by about two hundred armed natives. While the attention of the whites was distracted by the throng, some clever fellows contrived to steal from the boat a tomahawk, an axe, and a saw. In the *melée* one of the natives was said to have seized the master's mate in his arms. If disposed to be quarrelsome, we imagine the spear or boomerang would have been thrown, and not the baby-carrying process adopted. If they desired a choice morsel for supper they would hardly have fondled their victim in that style, as they never take prisoners alive and torture them like the American Indians.

At any rate these "obviously hostile intentions made the application of fire-arms absolutely necessary to repel them, by which one native was killed and two or three wounded." This was the baptism of blood. It provoked revenge. The aborigines rallied their forces on the hill. A fine-looking man, as chief, came down alone in a most heroic manner to the tent, talking vehemently, and holding a very large war spear in a position for throwing. The British officer was struck with this gallant fellow, and determined to meet him frankly and kindly. He had confidence in the man because of his courage, and therefore laid down his gun and went to meet the savage. The noble-minded aborigine appreciated the white man's trustfulness, and immediately relinquished the spear. But the tribe kept on their vociferations and their warlike demonstrations, and were advancing down the hill. Mr. Tuckey motioned the chief to keep them back. He issued his command for them to retire. But not comprehending his language in the tumult, or disregarding his entreaties if heard, they tarried not in their progress; they wanted blood for blood. Not a moment was to be lost. The foremost in the throng was selected, and laid low by a musket ball. At the

Digitized by Google

dreadful sound the chief turned and fled with his retreating countrymen.

Mr. Tuckey gives a sketch of our sable acquaintances. "The men were gaily adorned with pipeclay-painted faces, a head dress of swans' feathers, a necklace of reeds, and a bone or reed thrust fancifully through the septum of their nostrils." The only notice of the ladies is this—"One woman only was seen, who retired by desire of the men on our approach." The men were seen not to have their front tooth out like their neighbours at Sydney. The straw baskets were praised more than their spears or their intelligence; for says our writer, "I should imagine the kangaroos out of the reach of their weapons or their ingenuity." As to their vanity, he tells us, "The Parisian beau cannot take greater pains in adjusting his hair, and perfuming himself with the odours of the East, than the savage does in bedaubing his face with clays, or anointing his skin with the blubber of a whale.'

THE FRENCH AND THE BLACKS IN 1803.

Peron, the naturalist on board Admiral Baudin's French discovery ship, *Geographe*, gives about the earliest notice of our aborigines. Entering Flinders' Western Port in 1803, the Frenchmen named an island Frenchman, now French. It was there that Peron had his first interview with our natives, most probably the first of the kind, excepting the glance with which Flinders had been favoured some weeks before in Port Phillip Bay. Though short the description, it is important.

"Such of the natives they saw seemed mistrustful and perfidious. In their features, the shape of the head, the smoothness and great length of the hair, the inhabitants differ from D'Entrecasteaux Channel (Tasmania). They paint their body and face with stripes, crosses, white and red circles; and pierce the nostrils, through which they thrust a small stick six or seven inches long, like the aborigines of Port Jackson. They wear collar fashion a sort of necklace, formed of a number of short tubes of coarse straw. They blacken the body and face with powdered charcoal. Of thirteen individuals seen, one only was clothed with a black skin, the other twelve being wholly naked."

STURT AND THE MURRAY BLACKS IN 1830.

Captain Charles Sturt, the devoted and successful Australian explorer, set out from Sydney in November, 1829, and succeeded in following down the Murray river to its embouchure through Lake Victoria into Encounter Bay, South Australia. First tracing our northern boundary, he was the earliest European visitant of those distant tribes. It will be seen that though these had not before seen a white man, they had to a fearful extent experienced in an indirect manner the curse of contact. New and loathsome diseases appeared among them, for the suffering of which they had no means of alleviation. Both in going down the stream and in returning, Mr. Sturt came in sight of thousands of natives. His courage prompted him to undertake so adventurous a journey, and his benevolence occasioned that perilous expedition to be unattended with bloodshed. For further particulars of that voyage we refer the reader to the "Discovery and Settlement of Port Phillip;" we have now to confine our remarks to the Captain's intercourse with Buckley's Black Friends. He thus introduces his first visit from the Murray tribes.

"Some natives were observed running by the river-side behind us, but on turning the boat's head toward the shore, they ran away. It was evident they had no idea what we were, and, from their timidity, feeling assured that it would be impossbile to bring them to a parley, we continued onwards till our usual hour of stopping, when we pitched our tents on the left bank for the night, it being the one opposite to that on which the natives had appeared. We conjectured that their curiosity would lead them to follow us, which they very shortly did; for we had scarcely made ourselves comfortable, when we heard their wild notes through the woods as they advanced towards the river; and their breaking into view with their spears and shields, and painted and prepared as they were for battle, was extremely fine. They stood threatening us, and making a great noise, for a considerable time, but finding that we took no notice of them, they at length became quiet. I then walked to some distance from the party, and taking a branch in my hand, as a sign of peace, beckoned them to swim to our side of the river, which, after some time, two or three of them did. But they approached me with great caution, hesitating at every step. They soon, however, gained confidence, and were ultimately joined by all the males of their tribe. I gave the first who swam the river a tomahawk (making this a rule in order to encourage them), with which he was highly delighted. I shortly afterwards placed them all in a row, and fired a gun before them: they were quite unprepared for such an explosion, and after standing stupefied and motionless for a moment or two, they simultaneously took to their heels, to our great

Digitized by Google

amusement. I succeeded, however, in calling them back, and they regained their confidence so much, that sixteen of them remained with us all night, but the greater number retired at sunset. On the following morning they accompanied us down the river, where we fell in with their tribe, who were stationed on an elevated bank, a short distance below, to the number of eighty-three men, women, and children. Their appearance was extremely picturesque and singular. They wanted us to land, but time was too precious for such delays. Some of the boldest of the natives swam round and round the boat, so as to impede the use of the oars, and the women on the bank evinced their astonishment by mingled yells and cries. They entreated us, by signs, to remain with them; but as I foresaw a compliance on this occasion would hereafter be attended with inconvenience, I thought it better to proceed on our journey; and the natives soon ceased their importunities, and, indeed, did not follow or molest us.

* * * * *

"On the 19th, as we were about to conclude our journey for the day, we saw a large body of natives before us. On approaching them they showed every disposition for combat, and ran along the banks with spears in rests, as if only waiting for an opportunity to throw them at us. They were upon the right, and as the river was broad enough to enable me to steer wide of them, I did not care much for their threats; but upon another party appearing on the left bank, I thought it high time to disperse one or other of them, as the channel was not wide enough to enable me to keep clear of danger, if assailed by both, as I might be while keeping amid the channel. I found however, they did not know how to use the advantage they possessed, as the two divisions formed a junction; those on the left swimming over to the stronger body upon the right bank. This fortunately prevented the necessity of any hostile measure on my part, and we were suffered to proceed unmolested for the present. The whole then followed us, without any symptom of fear, but making a dreadful shouting, and beating their spears and shields together, by way of intimidation. It is but justice to my men to say that, in all this critical situation, they evinced the greatest coolness, though it was impossible for any one to witness such a scene with indifference. As I did not intend to fatigue the men by continuing to pull farther than we were in the habit of doing, we landed at our usual time on the left bank, and while the people were pitching the tents, I walked down the bank with McLeay, to treat with these desperadoes in the best way we could across the water—a measure to which my men showed great reluctance, declaring that if during our absence the natives approached them, they would undoubtedly fire upon them. I assured them it was not my intention to go out of their sight. We took our guns with us, but determined not to use them until the last extremity, both from a reluctance to shed blood, and with a view to our future security. I held a long pantomimical dialogue with them across the water, and held out the olive branch in token of amity. They at length laid aside their spears, and a long consultation took place among them, which ended in two or three wading into the river, contrary, as it appeared, to the earnest remonstrance of the majority, who, finding that their entreaties had no effect, wept aloud, and followed them, with a determination, I am sure, of sharing their fate, whatever it might have been. As soon as they landed, McLeay and I retired to a little distance from the bank and sat down, that being the usual way among the natives of the interior to invite to an interview. When they saw us act thus, they approached and sat down with us, but without looking up, from a kind of diffidence peculiar to them, and which exists even amongst the nearest relatives, as I have already had occasion to observe. As they gained confidence, however, they showed an excessive curiosity, and stared at us in the most earnest manner. We now led them to the camp, and I gave, as was my custom, the first who approached, a tomahawk, and to the others some pieces of iron hoop. Those who had crossed the river amounted to about thirty-five in number. At sunset the majority of them left us; but three old men remained at the fireside all night. I observed that few of them had either lost their front teeth, or lacerated their bodies, as the more westerly tribes do. The most loathsome diseases prevailed among them. Several were disabled by leprosy, or some similar disorder, and two or three had entirely lost their sight. They are, undoubtedly, a brave and confiding people, and are by no means wanting in natural affection. In person they resemble the mountain tribes. They have the thick lips, the sunken eye, the extended nostril, and long beards; and both smooth and curly hair are common among them. The lower extremities appear to bear no proportion to their bust in point of muscular strength, but the facility with which they ascend trees of the largest growth, and the activity with which they move upon all occasions, together with their singular erect stature, argue that such appearance is entirely deceptive. The old men slept very soundly by the fire, and

Digitized by Google

were the last to get up in the morning. McLeay's extreme good humour had made a most favourable impression upon them, and I can picture him even now, joining in their wild cry. Whether it was from his entering so readily into their mirth, or from anything peculiar that struck them, the impression upon the whole of us was, that they took him to have been originally a black, in consequence of which they gave him the name of Rundi. Certain it is, they pressed him to show his side, and asked if he had not received a wound there—evidently as if the original Rundi had met with a violent death from a spear wound in that place. The whole tribe, amounting in number to upwards of 150, assembled to see us take our departure. Four of them accompanied us, among whom there was one remarkable for personal strength and stature."

It was the next day after this interview that our countrymen nearly fared the fate of Mungo Park in Africa. Turning an angle in the river, they saw a vast concourse of some five or six hundred natives, armed and wrathful, prepared to take vengeance upon the white strangers for this invasion of their country. A projecting sandband afforded better approach to their victims; on this the leaders in brutal glee awaited the drifting of the boat. The danger was imminent. The guns were ready, the very finger was on the trigger, when Mr. McLeay called out that another party was approaching on the opposite bank. In a moment after, a man threw himself off a lofty cliff into the water, swam up to a big savage on the shore, seized him by his throat, and forcibly pushed him back from the river. "At one moment," says Sturt, "pointing to the boat, at another shaking his clenched fist in the faces of the most forward, and stamping with passion on the sand." This was their gigantic friend, who arrived in time to save them. The leader closes the story in these words: "We were so wholly lost in interest at the scene that was passing, that the boat was allowed to drift at pleasure. For my own part I was overwhelmed with astonishment, and in truth stunned and confused, so singular, so unexpected, and so strikingly providential had been our escape."

Upon another occasion they were relieved from a difficulty by the same noble hearted man. The boat had got fast, and a large tribe came unexpectedly upon them. But the well known voice of their tall, dark brother was heard; Sturt shouted in reply, and signalized distress. Plenty of bark canoes were launched immediately; using their spears for poles and paddles, the natives pushed off the boat, and set the Europeans afloat again. We are distressed, however, to read in Captain Sturt's journal such passages as follow: "The most loathsome of diseases prevailed among the tribes, nor were the youngest infants exempt from them. Indeed, so young were some whose condition was truly disgusting, that I cannot but suppose that they have been born in a state of disease." "Syphilis prevails amongst them with fearful violence. I distributed some Turner's cereate to the women, but left Fraser to superintend its application. It would do no good, of course, but it convinced the natives we intended well towards them, and on that account it was politic to give it, setting aside any humane feeling." His prudence showed itself in his discipline; thus he says, "I was particularly careful not to do anything that would alarm them, or to permit any liberty to be taken with their women. Our reserve in this respect seemed to excite their surprise, for they asked sundry questions, by signs and expressions, as to whether we had any women, and where they were. The whole tribe generally assembled to receive us, and all, without exception, were in a complete state of nudity; and really the loathsome condition and hideous countenances of the women would, I should imagine, have been a complete antidote to the sensual passion." He furthermore tells us, "with every new tribe we were obliged to submit to an examination, and to be pulled about, and fingered all over."

MAJOR MITCHELL AND THE BLACKS, IN 1836.

This distinguished discoverer of what he called Australia Felix arrived at Lake Benanee, by the Murray, July 27, 1836. To his surprise he fell in with a tribe with whom he had a brush some two hundred miles off, upon the Darling. They called out, "Goway, goway, goway;" which, being interpreted, means, "Come here." Piper, the Sydney aboriginal guide, did not admire their contiguity, and seriously asked his leader, what the Governor said to him about killing the "Wild Blackfellow;" giving a significant idea of the estimation of their value. Though at first the tribe assumed friendly appearances, there was not wanting proof of their hostile spirit. An old fellow approached the Major quite confidently and smilingly, with a bundle of spears concealed beneath his kangaroo rug. But they were prepared. It was noticed that the rascals, with the cunning of foxes, understood the business of getting guns ready. A few shots procured "permanent deliverance of the party from imminent danger." It was

Digitized by Google

among these people that the explorer saw an Australian beauty. "The youngest," says he, "was the handsomest female I had ever seen among the natives. She was so far from black, that the red colour was very apparent in her cheek. She sat before me in a corner of the group, nearly in the attitude of Mr. Bailey's fine statue of Eve at the Fountain; and apparently equally unconscious that she was naked." An old man civilly offered to barter her for a tomahawk to the evidently admiring soldier. His refusal was doubtless regarded as more foolish than scrupulous.

The English were amused with the Painted Tribe, the men of which accurately marked out the muscles of their bodies with the help of the pipe-clay. Speaking of an Australian Barrington, the traveller writes:—"His hands were ready to seize any living thing; his step, light and noiseless as that of a shadow, gave no intention of his approach." Some of these folks believed that the clothes of the Europeans made them proof against attack by the spear. When near Mount William, our countrymen were agreeably surprised to meet with a blackfellow who could say the word "milk," and had been in whitefellows' company before. Upon the banks of the Glenelg, Mitchell fell in with a lubra and her child. The little fellow was being carried on her back between a kangaroo rug and a circular mat covering. He is thus described: "His pleasant and youthful face, he being a very fine specimen of the native race, presented a striking contrast to the miserable looks of his whining mother." The manner in which the explorers warded off an impending attack was as effectual as novel. The natives had been thronging them for some time; and, with all their assumed candour and indifference, Piper discovered that they contemplated a night onslaught upon the trespassers on their hunting grounds. Their thirst for blood was allayed by a capital manœuvre of the old Peninsular warrior. When quite dark, "at a given signal, Burnett suddenly sallied forth, wearing a gilt mask, and holding in his hand a blue light, with which he fired a rocket. Two men, concealed behind the boat carriage, bellowed hideously through speaking trumpets, while all the others shouted and discharged their carbines in the air. Burnett marched solemnly toward the astonished natives, who were seen through the gloom but for an instant, as they made their escape and disappeared for ever."

THE ASSOCIATION AND THE BLACKS.

We must refer the reader to the "Discovery and Settlement of Port Phillip" for particulars of the Association of certain respectable Tasmanian colonists in 1835, under the management of Mr. John Batman, whose object was the settlement of this colony. Their intention is thus set forth by Major Mercer, one of the company: "The formation of a nucleus of a free and useful colony, founded upon principles of conciliation and civilisation, of philanthropy, morality and temperance, without danger of its ever becoming onerous to the mother country, and calculated to insure the well-being and comfort of the natives." If not settled by a confederation of humane and intelligent persons, he predicted that "The country would be, if ever, occupied hereafter by the extermination of the aboriginal inhabitants alone."

For this purpose, Mr. Batman was sent over to conciliate the good feelings of the aborigines by presents and fair treaty; as he stated in his letter from Launceston to Governor Arthur: "By obtaining from them a grant of a portion of that territory, on equitable principles, not only might the sources of this colony be considerably extended, but the object of civilisation be established; and which in process of time would lead to the civilisation of a large portion of the aborigines." Additional evidence of this worthy spirit is seen in the following document.

"*Memorandum for Mr. Batman's Guidance about the Natives.*

"The first point to be attended to, is to keep up a friendly feeling on their part to the establishment, and to insure on their part a feeling of confidence, and the next is to make them as useful to the Association as possible. Much may be done by the force of example through the Sydney natives. It will be desirable to have two scales of rations: one for them who will make themselves useful, and a less scale for those who will not. That civilisation will best proceed by dividing the natives into families, and employing six or eight at each of the stations, if they can be induced voluntarily to do so; but it must not be done by compulsion. Habits of labour will only be acquired by degrees; and if each party were allowed to have a small piece of ground to cultivate for themselves, it would materially assist.

"It will be very expedient to appoint Buckley superintendent of the natives, for he will be enabled under Mr. Batman's directions to keep them in proper order, and to make them understand the advantages they will receive in pursuing this plan, and so soon as this is accomplished they will become useful servants of the institution.

Digitized by Google

"Some regard ought to be had to the amount of tribute payable, and that for the excess some equivalent in labour given, but it will not be desirable in the first instance to coerce the natives to labour.

"It may be questionable whether it will be prudent to give the natives mutton, otherwise the flocks may and most probably will hereafter suffer; if they required animal food it will be better to supply them with salt pork.

"Signed—J. T. Gellibrand, for C. Swanston, J. T. Gellibrand, Jno. H. Wedge, W. G. Sams, Anthy. Cottrell, M. Connelly.

"October 22, 1835."

In a letter of Batman's to Governor Arthur, dated October 23, 1835, we have the following reference to the natives:—"I have the honour of reporting the progress made by the Association since July last with the native tribes. From that period up to the commencement of this month, when Mr. Wedge left Port Phillip, the intercourse has been kept up upon the most friendly terms, and from eighty to one hundred natives have been clothed and supplied with daily rations at the expense of the Association. The natives have been partially occupied in habits of industry, and I have not the least hesitation in affirming, that if no unforeseen obstacles occur, a gradual system of civilisation will obtain."

The Association provided suitable married and well conducted servants for their stations in Port Phillip, organised a system of protection for the natives, and appointed a gentleman, Dr. Thomson, of Geelong, as surgeon and catechist. But after contesting with Government for some time, the authorities would not sanction their purchase from the aborigines, and the company ceased to exist. Yet the influence of their judicious and Christian policy remained long afterwards, and gave a tone to the treatment of the inhabitants. These never suffered like the poor Tasmanians. Whatever they endured from certain brutal stockkeepers, the squatters, as a class, had respect to their claims, and treated them with humanity and kindness.

MR. BATMAN AND THE BLACKS.

This interesting Founder of the Colony of Port Phillip was a devoted friend to the dark-skinned man. He was warmly attached to the persecuted Tasmanians; and he evidenced his honest regard to the interests of our aborigines, by the honourable treaty he sought to make with them, which is described at length in the author's other work on the colony. When he arrived as a settler with his family, there were always many natives to be seen lounging about Batman's Hill. The visitors by the *Rattlesnake*, in June, 1836, were much amused by the Soyer demonstration which the kind-hearted Batman had prepared for his black friends. There was a large boiler outside, full of rice, and into which dark masses of sugar were tumbled with the stirring. Then came a man with a shovel, and scooped up a ration for each expectant one. Loud laughter accompanied the process, and gratified merriment aided digestion. It so happened, at one of these reunions, that something was missing,—a most unusual circumstance. Sending for his telescope, Mr. Batman slowly walked round the group, looking to discover the offender. The excitement and perturbation of the thief at this novel and certain mode of detection revealed his guilt.

Our Founder first came in contact with the Port Phillip blacks on Sunday, 31st May, 1835, on the western shore of the Bay. Having with him some civilised Sydney natives, he sent them onward, a-head, to a camp of twenty women and twenty-four children, who were comforting themselves over fires in the absence of their hunting lords. Mr. Batman has the following notices of them in his journal:—"They seemed quite pleased with my natives, who could partially understand them; they sang and danced for them." "Every woman had a child at her back but one, who was quite young, and very good looking." Each of these ladies had a burden to carry of some sixty pounds weight in their nets, consisting of roots, bones, nuts, tomahawks, &c. One had a part of a wheel-spoke, and another an iron hoop. The account is thus continued:—"They came back with us, where I had some blankets, looking-glasses, beads, handkerchiefs, and apples. I gave them eight pairs of blankets, thirty handkerchiefs, eighteen necklaces of beads, six pounds of sugar, twelve looking-glasses, and a quantity of apples, which they seemed much pleased with." Then follows a notice of the fair one:—"The young woman whom I have spoken of before, gave me a very handsome basket of her own make." A notice of the younger folks follows:—"The children were very good looking, and of a healthy appearance."

One week after, he fell in with a friendly chief and his family near the Merri Creek, who introduced him to the rest of his tribe, the Jagga Jagga. There were three noble brothers of that name, who ever afterward became the sincere and devoted followers of Mr. Batman. It was with these that he entered into his famous treaty. The William Penn of Port Phillip closes his account of that week with the aborigines with these

Digitized by Google

words: "They certainly appear to me to be of a superior race of natives which I have ever seen."

MR. WEDGE AND THE BLACKS IN 1835.

We have been favoured with a manuscript notice of our Port Phillip natives from John Helder Wedge, Esq., M.P., of Tasmania, and once one of the Port Phillip Association. This is the record of his visit to the black friends of the Wild White Man, a couple of months before Mr. Fawkner came to this country:—

"On landing at Port Phillip on the 7th August, 1835, at the encampment of the party, three white men and some Sydney natives left for the purpose of maintaining the friendly intercourse which had been established with the aborigines of that part of New Holland, I found seven families of the natives residing in their huts around the encampment. The greater part of them were absent at the time on a hunting excursion, but a boy came down with the white men to welcome us on our arrival. An old man (Pewitt) and his two wives were at the huts, together with some young girls who had been promised in marriage to the Sydney natives left by Mr. Batman. I soon learnt that the most friendly understanding existed with the natives; indeed, I scarcely needed this information, for it was evident from the light-hearted playfulness of the boy, the cheerfulness of the old man, and the vivacious loquacity of the females, who came and shook hands with me on my arrival. They were evidently anxious to inform me by signs that the families who inhabited the several huts were out hunting and that they would come in the evening. On the return of the various families with the game which they had obtained during the day, the members severally welcomed me by a shake of the hand. The only married female of our party (Mrs. H. Batman) and her four little daughters, with whom the natives were much delighted, particularly attracted their attention. Although they brought home with them plenty of provisions, consisting of various edible roots, kangaroo-rats, and calkiel (the young ants in a fly state taken from decayed hollow trees), they soon began to importune us for bread and other things, not excepting the cutlery. From this I inferred at once that, to satisfy their newly-acquired appetite for our food and other things which we brought with us, such as knives, tomahawks, and blankets, was a sure way of conciliating them.

"In this conclusion at which I thus arrived, I was fully confirmed by Buckley, who on every occasion evinced the greatest desire to be of use, whenever he had it in his power to do so, and who gave me a general outline of the character of the different natives as they arrived, one of whom (Murradonnanuke) he pointed out as being more to be dreaded on account of his treachery, than any of the other chiefs; as one of the main objects I had in view, besides examining the country, was to make myself acquainted with the habits and dispositions of the natives, I devoted the first few days after my arrival to studying their characters. For this purpose I went out hunting with them daily, and spent the greater part of my time among them. I soon satisfied myself that by a little tact and management there was no danger to be apprehended from them, although I learnt from Buckley that in the treatment of each other they were treacherous. To command their respect, I found it was necessary to make them fully understand that it was in our power, not only to minister to their wants and comforts, but amply to avenge any outrage. In impressing them with this idea Buckley was of great use to me, by making known to them the ample means we had of furnishing them with food, blankets, &c.; and explaining the object which we had in view in settling amongst them, and our desire to be on friendly terms with them, which was mainly compassed by evincing a confidence devoid of fear in our deportment towards them, and by abstaining from any act which might lead them to doubt the sincerity of our intentions. I learnt from Buckley that they were cannibals. His statement on this head was confirmed by the two youths who attached themselves to me during my stay in New Holland, and who accompanied me on several excursions I made into the interior; but they do not seem to indulge in this horrible propensity except when the tribes are at war with each other, when the bodies of those who are killed are roasted, and their bones are infallibly picked by the teeth of their enemy. Of this custom they make no secret, and on being questioned speak of it as a matter of course, and describe the mode of preparing their victim for the repast. Disgusting as is this practice (the process of which is too revolting to commit to paper), a still more horrible one, if possible, prevails—that of destroying their infant at its birth. The cause by which they appear to be influenced, is the custom they have of nursing their children till they are three or four years old. To get rid, therefore, of the trouble and inconvenience of finding sustenance for two, should the second be born before the eldest is weaned, they destroy the youngest

Digitized by Google

immediately after it is born. Although this explanation was given me by Buckley, and I have no doubt this is in most instances the cause, yet some women perpetrate the murder of their infants from mere wantonness, and as it would seem to us, a total absence of that maternal feeling which is found even in the brute creation. One woman in particular (the wife, I think, of Mullamboid) was pointed out to me, who had destroyed ten out of eleven of her children, one of whom she killed a few days previous to my arrival at the Port. Notwithstanding the increase of the tribes is thus kept down, polygamy is common amongst them; few of the men have less than two wives, and some of them four or five. The women, as is the case with most savages, are quite subservient to the men, and are kept in excellent discipline; chastisement quickly follows the least offence, and a fire-stick is not unfrequently the instrument of correction. The wealth of the men may be said to consist in the number of their wives, for their chief employment is in procuring food for their lords. On one occasion I was witness to a scene that afforded me some amusement, although it was no fun to the poor women concerned. My attention was attracted by the outcry of the women who were receiving chastisement from their husband (Murradonnanuke) who was punishing them by throwing fire-sticks at them in the most furious manner. On inquiry, I learnt that the cause of offence arose from the poor creatures not having brought home that evening a quantity of provisions sufficient to satisfy his insatiable appetite. In the regulations which prevail respecting their wives they have one which seems to have some connection with, or similar to, the Mosaic law. On the death of the husband his wives became the property of the eldest of his brothers, or his next of kin. The men are jealous of their wives, and should any intrigue be discovered it would probably lead to the death of one or both of the offending parties; although, if the husband receives what he considers to be an adequate compensation, he is accommodating to his friend. I do not believe infidelity is frequent among the women, unless sanctioned by the husband. During the whole time I was among them I never observed any advances or levity of conduct on their part, although it is not at all improbable that they are restrained by fear of consequences should they be detected. In bestowing daughters for wives, they are frequently promised as soon as they are born, and on these occasions the parents receive presents of food, opossum and kangaroo rugs, clubs, spears, &c., from the person to whom she is betrothed, and this arrangement is considered to be binding, although it sometimes happens that these promises are broken by the parents, especially when the man who has received the promise belongs to another and distant tribe. When this occurs, it creates a feeling of enmity, and it is not unfrequently taken up by the whole tribe, who make common cause with the aggrieved party. If they once determine on being revenged, they never lose sight of their object till they have satisfied themselves by a general conflict with the tribe to whom the offending party belongs, or it sometimes happens that the poor girl and her husband are singled out, and in the dead of the night the spear gives both a passport to the land whose inhabitants live without hunting. The men are prohibited from looking at the mother of the girls promised them in marriage. This singular custom is observed with the strictest caution. On passing the hut of the mother-in-law, or any place where they suppose her to be, they carefully turn their head away, and evince great concern if by any chance they should see her, although I am not aware of any penalty being attached to the offence save that of displeasing the parents. On meeting with Nallaboin and his family, I took notice that a young girl just married carefully avoided looking at a particular man, for what reason I cannot divine, unless it was that the old man had been promised her first daughter.

"From inquiries which I made on the subject, I am induced to believe that a feeling of enmity does not permanently exist among the tribes, as it is terminated by a general battle royal, something after the style of an Irish fair. A short time previous to my departure a few men with their wives, from an adjoining tribe, came to that amongst whom I was living, with an invitation to join them in a conflict which they meditated with an adjoining tribe. They sent two or three young men to a tribe to the westward, inviting them also to join them on this occasion. I learnt that this hostile feeling had been created by a man having lost one of his eyes in a scuffle with a man belonging to the Western Port tribe. This accident happened about eight months previously, and although the party who now sought to avenge himself was the aggressor, having wounded his antagonist with a spear, he nevertheless determined on having satisfaction, and had succeeded in inducing his own tribe and that with which I was living, and probably would influence the other also, to whom an embassy of young men had been despatched to the westward, to espouse the cause of his odd eye. They also gave an invitation to the seven Sydney natives to join them with their guns. This of course I discouraged, and I

Digitized by Google

was not without hopes that they might be induced through the influence of Buckley to forego their intention of taking their revenge, although from what he said, I concluded there was not much chance of such a result. Buckley said that the time of their meeting was very uncertain, that it might happen in a week or two, or it might be put off some months, but that the collision was almost certain to take place sooner or later. In these conflicts it does not often happen that many lives are lost, seldom more than one or two; frequently all return from the place alive and no other mischief done than an eye less, a head broken, or an impression made upon their coatless backs by a club or spear; so expert are they in avoiding the missiles of their opponents. All feeling of hostility ceases with the battle, and cordiality again prevails, till it is interrupted by the impulse of their feeling, which is extremely sensitive; in fact, they are nearly as pugnacious as though their birth-place had been the Green Island. Like all others—uncivilised and in a state of nature—they are astonishingly dexterous in the use of their weapons, employed by them in the defence of their persons and in procuring food; and in tracking each other, as well as kangaroos and other animals they are very expert. The most trifling disarrangement of the grass, a broken twig, or the slightest thing which indicates the direction of the object of pursuit is at once perceived by them, and they follow the track with ease at a brisk pace. On several occasions I witnessed their adroitness in this respect. In fact, their perceptions in seeing, hearing and smelling are surprisingly acute, and in the pursuit of their game they evince the patient perseverance so peculiar to man living in a state of nature. Their food consists principally of kangaroo and other animals, fish, and roots of various sorts; black swans, ducks, and many other birds; in fact there is scarcely any animal or bird which comes amiss to them, and many reptiles: amongst others a species of snake comes within their bill of fare. In their appetites they are quite ravenous, and the quantity they devour at one meal would astonish even a London alderman, although they are not quite so fastidious in the quality of their viands.

"I could not learn that they have any religious observances, and indeed from the information gathered from Buckley, I am led to believe they have no idea whatever of a Supreme Being, although it is somewhat difficult to reconcile the fact of their believing in a future state, for they certainly entertain the idea that, after death, they again exist, being transformed into white men. This is obviously a new idea since they have been acquainted with us, and is an evidence that the friendly intercourse we have established with them will, by degrees, operate upon their minds, and gradually work an amelioration of their condition. Of this being ultimately affected I entertain very sanguine expectations, and I think I am warranted in doing so, by the result of the experiments I made to induce them to habits of industry whilst residing amongst them. The men on several occasions rendered assistance in carrying sod for the erection of our huts, and many of the women were almost constantly employed in making baskets, during the last week or ten days previous to my departure. In re-payment for these and other services, bread was given them on the completion of their tasks, with which they were well satisfied, and I have little doubt *if proper arrangements were made*, and attention paid, that great progress might be made in a short time towards establishing more civilised habits. Their whole time may be said to be devoted to procuring food during the day. All their thoughts seem to be directed towards ministering to their appetites. The women are the drudges of their husbands, and are seldom idle during the day, being for the most part employed either in getting the various edible roots with which the country abounds, or in making baskets and nets, and any other occupations directed by their husband. Their habitations are of the most rude and simple construction, the materials of which they are made being the branches of trees laid with tolerable compactness, and pitched at an angle of about 45 degrees. In shape they form a segment of a circle, and their size is in proportion to the number of inmates of which the family is composed."

THE FIRST OVERLANDER AND THE BLACKS.

Mr. John Gardiner came overland from Sydney to Melbourne at the latter end of 1835. In giving us the narrative of that cattle-driving trip, he said that only upon one occasion did he fall in with any natives, and that was upon the Dividing Range, somewhere in the Kilmore district. He was then saluted by a black with the cry of "Batman!" accompanied with the usual glucking sound of astonishment. His lubra was a tall, noble looking woman, with very handsome features, and an olive complexion. The travellers immediately set her down for a daughter of the gigantic wild white man, Buckley. Their native stock-keeper from Sydney fell desperately in love with the lady, and would have her on any terms. He very seriously deliberated upon the best means of

Digitized by Google

rendering her a widow, that he might become her protector.

The Quaker missionary, James Backhouse, tells the following singular story respecting this Overlander, which he heard from that gentleman, on the Yarra, in 1837. "In one of J. Gardiner's journeys from Sydney, one of his men was bitten by a venomous serpent. The wound was sucked, but the man showed symptoms of faintness of alarming character. The party had received intimation from a native woman, that some of her countrymen intended to attack them in the night; and at the juncture, when the poison seemed to be taking effect, the lights of the natives were seen approaching. The party were thrown into a state of alarm; they watched a favourable opportunity, seized the blacks at unawares, and expostulated with them against making such an attack upon persons in no way disposed to injure them. The chief was detained as a hostage, and placed under the charge of one of the party, who, being overcome by fatigue, fell asleep, and his captive escaped, but returned no more to annoy them. These circumstances diverted the attention of the company from the envenomed man, and his case was forgotten until the next morning, when he was inquired of respecting his welfare. He also had forgotten his malady; fear seems to have suspended the effect of the poison, and he said he felt no more of it from the time the lights of the blacks appeared."

COUNT STRZELECKI AND THE GIPPS LAND BLACKS.

This kind-hearted, scientific Polish noble wrote an interesting work upon Australia some twenty years ago. When descending from our Alps into the country he called Gipps Land, his party came upon a large encampment of the wild natives. Having been for several days on short allowance for water, the Europeans rushed hastily toward a pool; they were instantly withheld by their own aboriginal guide, who represented their conduct as indecorous, impolitic, and dangerous: they were on the lands of strangers, and had no legal right to fire or water. At his direction, therefore, they sat down quietly upon the grass. A quarter of an hour had elapsed, when one of the Gippslanders came across, and politely handed them a piece of burning wood; with this a fire was kindled, and an opossum cooked for supper. But it was drink they were so anxious to obtain. Yet among these wild children of nature there were set conventional forms of society as binding and exactive as those of refined circles, and the infringement of which perilled the social position of the offender. It was contrary to aboriginal etiquette to ask for water. The guide then began gnawing at a stick, all the while casting side-long, wistful glances at the pool; the look was sufficiently suggestive, and a calabash of water was generously brought to them.

They now prepared for sleep. When the gentlemen at home witnessed these final camping preparations, they sent an old man to confer with our party. The guide met him. A long yabber ensued. Questions were asked about the white men,—why they came, and where they were going. The envoy returned to his tribe, and was heard in shrill accents loudly repeating the nature of the conference. Silence followed this communication; after which the tribe came to a decision. The old man appeared with the ultimatum. The white men were instantly to depart. Knowing that appeal would be useless, they gathered up their knapsacks and went on their way. Trespassers were not allowed; but instead of steel traps and spring-guns, they were first tendered the rights of hospitality, and suffered to recruit their physical system, before ordered to withdraw. It has not been quite in that courteous style that we have driven the owners of the soil from our homesteads.

MR McMILLAN AND THE GIPPS LAND NATIVES.

Though Count Strzelecki was the first who traversed the Snowy Alpine country between Sydney and Melbourne, ascended Mount Kosciusko, and named a province after Governor Gipps, yet to Mr. McMillan is undoubtedly due the priority of discovery of that very interesting locality. Having been specially furnished by that gentleman with an account of his expedition in 1840, we extract such portions for the present work as relate to the aborigines. We have introduced to us an account of his Maneroo native guide Jemmy, and his fears of the formidable Gippslanders.

"Jemmy Gibber was getting fearfully alarmed of meeting with a wild tribe of blacks, called Warrigals, inhabiting that part of the country, and consequently refused to proceed any farther with me, making an attempt to get away from me. I was then in a wild mountainous country, covered principally with scrub, and my companion gave me to understand that he was ignorant of our whereabouts, and that I must trust to my tinder-box (a name he gave to my pocket-compass). I got him to go on with me until the evening, when we camped and

Digitized by Google

lighted our fire; and, after taking refreshment, laid down to rest. I nearly paid dearly this night for my confidence in my companion. After being some time asleep, I awoke suddenly, and to my consternation found Jemmy Gibber standing over me with his upraised waddy or club, one blow of which would have settled me. I at once presented my pistol at him, when he at once cried out, begging me not to shoot him: that he had been dreaming that another blackfellow had been taking away his wife, and that he did not want to kill me. But it was evident to me his intention was to take my life, that he might then return home."

He then shows us these ugly strangers:—

"This was the first day on which I met any of the black tribes, or wild blacks. On meeting us they approached close up to us, and stood looking at us until I dismounted, when they commenced yelling, and instantly took to their heels. It is my belief they took the horse and rider to be one until I dismounted, having never seen a white man or a horse before."

Again we read: "About three morasses to the north-east of the River Latrobe, we saw some hundreds of the natives, who, on our approach, burned their camp and betook themselves to the scrub; we, however, managed to overtake an old man that could not walk fast; to him I gave a knife and a pair of trowsers, and endeavoured by all means in my power to open a communication with the blacks through him, but they would not come near us. It was amusing to see the old man after shaking hands with all the party, walking up to the horses and shaking each of them by the bridle, thinking the same form necessary to be gone through with them as with us. The only ornaments he had about him were human hands, either men's or women's, beautifully preserved, suspended from his neck."

"On my way back from the station, I was informed that my party had been driven out of the New Country by the wild blacks, which I found to be true. Mr. McAlister whom I had left in charge of the party had a very narrow escape, six of the blacks attacked him at once and deprived him of his gun. They were obliged to give way to the blacks, who pursued them for twenty-five miles." The sequel of the story is, that, accompanied by six others, he had a desperate skirmish with the natives in November, 1840. Poor McAlister was killed in a conflict in 1841. Even after the settlement was formed at Port Albert, it was long before one could stir a mile from the Port without being well armed.

Mr. McIntyre gave us a description of the wild Gippslanders' visit to the out station of Mr. Jamieson, Western Port. When they burst in upon the whites, they were evidently not up in a knowledge of our domestic life. They broke open the store for acquisitive reasons. The sugar and tea were emptied upon the earth as useless. The dairy afforded rare fun. They knew not what to make of the milk; so they poured that away. But the bright milk dishes took their fancy amazingly. Throwing them up in the air, they laughed immoderately at the brilliant glitter in the sunshine. The blankets only were appropriated and taken. No harm was done to any one. The wild men then retired to their mountain home.

THE WILD BLACKS OF LAKE HINDMARSH.

Mr. Protector Robinson, in 1845, first came in contact with these strange blackfellows, whom he thus describes:—"The aborigines were at the lake, and a frail canoe, for the purpose I presume of floating over the soft, and, in some places, deep mud, was on shore.

"The natives as we approached fled and hid themselves among the reeds or behind the trees. My native interpreter told them who I was, when they timidly came forth, and trembling stood before us. They were informed that white men would occupy their country and treat them kindly. They appeared greatly alarmed at the horses, and (except a young female adorned with emu feathers) were naked. I understood we were the first whites they had personal communication with. Their dietary consisted of frogs, shrimps, grubs and roots; the latter, cooked on heated stones and hot ashes. A fruit with an orbicular rough stone was observed. A large and well constructed native habitation, shaped in the form of a span roof, thatched with reeds, pleasantly situated on the verge of a pond, was quite unique and highly creditable to the skill and industry of the native artizans. On the Murray they exhume their dead. A tumulus on elevated ground, encircled by a neat parterre, had been recently formed, indicated by the embers of the watch fires and the green boughs on the top of the mound."

Digitized by Google

DESCRIPTION OF THE BLACKS.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE.

Most absurd and ludicrous caricatures have been given by voyagers and travellers in their passing glances. Mr. Pritchard, the greatest authority upon ethnology, thus refers to them: "The lean and half-starved forms of the Australians, and the disproportionate size of their limbs and head, are strongly exemplified by the plate representing the two Australian figures, which is taken from the magnificent atlas of M. d'Urville." The historian of the United States Exploring Expedition properly remarks on this: "Natives in a state of starvation may have borne some resemblance to the delineations given in most publications."

Although in our travels through the bush we have met with large numbers, and can bear testimony to the falsehood of such a charge of baboonish ugliness, we will place before the reader the language of two of the greatest Australian explorers, Dr. Leichhardt and Sir Thomas L. Mitchell. The first says: "They are a fine race of men. Their bodies individually, as well as the groups which they formed, would have delighted the eye of an artist. Is it fancy? But I am far more pleased in seeing the naked body of the blackfellow than that of the white man. When I was in Paris I was often in the public baths, and how few well-made men did I see." Mr. Gellibrand, when visiting the then wild natives of Port Phillip, was struck with the same thing. "They are a fine race of men," he says; "many of them handsome in their persons, and all well made. They are strong and athletic." And Capt. Hunter made the observation in 1789: "They are a straight, thin, and well-made people." Dr. Leichhardt, when visiting another part, thus notes his views: "The proportions of the body in the women and the men are as perfect as those of the Caucasian race, and the artist would find an inexhaustible source of observation and study among the black tribes." It was the same impulse as led Count Strzelecki to write: "When the native is beheld in the posture of striking or throwing his spear, his attitude leaves nothing to be desired in the point of manly grace."

But the most enthusiastic admirer the aborigines had was the late lamented and chivalrous Surveyor-General of New South Wales, Sir T. L. Mitchell. In one place he tells us, "If a naturalist looks a savage in the mouth, he finds ivory teeth, a clean tongue, and sweet breath; but in the mouth of a white specimen of similar or, indeed, of less age, it is ten to one he would discover only impurity and decay." He thus describes a wild black:—"He was a very perfect specimen of the genus homo, and such as never to be seen, except in the precincts of savage life. His motions in walking were more graceful than can be imagined by any who have only seen those of the draped and shod animal. The deeply set yet flexible spine; the taper form of the limbs; the fulness, yet perfect elasticity of the *glutei* muscles; the hollowness of the back, and symmetrical balance of the upper part of the torso, ornamented, as it was, like a piece of fine carving, with raised scarifications most tastefully placed; such were some of the characteristics of this perfect piece of work." And yet we have Captain Grant writing thus in 1802: "As there is thought to be a chain in creation, beginning with the brute and ending in man, I should be at a loss where to place my bush native, whether as the next link above the monkey, or below it."

Mr. Ludwig Becker, a martyr to Australian exploration, when examined before the Victorian Committee of Council respecting the physical condition of the aborigines, gave some valuable scientific information. In an account of the skull of John, the chief of the Adelaide tribe, he has the following observations: "The bones very much developed and of great strength. The peculiar character of the Australian race is in this specimen, well represented. Parietal diameter, 5½ inches; occipit-frontal diameter, 7½; width of forehead between the temples, 3¾. The zygoma, though very strong, is less projecting and less curved than in the Mongolian race. The upper jaw slants so much forwards that the facial angle is lowered to eighty-five degrees. In the same proportion the chin falls backwards. In consequence of the obliquity of the jaw, the front teeth are also in an oblique direction, so much so, that after some time, by chewing and gnawing, the teeth are worn away in such a manner as to resemble molar teeth, for which indeed they are often mistaken. The form of the

Digitized by Google

upper half of the cranium, when viewed from behind or in front, has a pyramidal shape, which I found to be the case with all the native skulls I had under examination. This appears to me to be a typical characteristic of the Australian race."

The following is his description of a native from Port Fairy, Victoria: "The likeness was taken by me from life, in 1854. His age was eighteen years; height, five feet two inches; complexion, light chocolate brown; flat nose; jaws, very much projecting; mouth, large; lips, sharp, edged with a reddish hue; teeth, complete and pure white; chin, small and receding; well shaped eyes, the iris nearly black, the white of the eye has a light yellowish tint; eyelashes, long and black; head, well formed; forehead, rising nearly perpendicular from horizontal; black and bushy eyebrows; hair, jet black and full. His voice is a fine manly baritone." Mr. Pardoe, an intelligent Melbourne dentist, thus refers to their teeth: "Large crowns, thickly covered by enamel, more so than Europeans; the fangs not so deeply seated in alreolar, nor does the epiphysis of maxillary bone cone so high as in Europe. The gums are much thicker and make up this loss." He found them vain of their teeth, which they cleaned with a reed.

Their eyes are large, brilliant, vivacious, and expressive. Their noses are broad, their teeth are powerful and white, their mouths are wide, and their hair is dark, glossy, and curly. Many men have beards of long and shining curls that would excite the envy of a Pasha. When an aboriginal young man is adorned for a corrobory, with his hair parted, greased, and curled; his sinewy and finely chiselled limbs untrammelled with dress; his noble bust artistically decorated with ochre by a favourite lady; and his joyous face beaming with exuberant good humour,—he presents a far more pleasing object to the lover of natural grace than the bejewelled, scented, smirking fop of civilisation. The skin is not quite black, but of a very dark copper cast. The use of grease, charcoal, and ochre, however beneficial in resisting the rays of the sun, obscures their colour. Cicatrices, or raised scars across their chests, supply as ornament the tatoo of the ancient English or modern New Zealander. Their habits may appear disgusting sometimes from our ignorance of their object. Their sense of decency is observed according to the Mosaic ritual, Deut. xxiii. 12, 13. The majestic step of our savage, his erect posture, the ease with which he comports himself in the presence of our colonial grandees, his independence, nay, his haughtiness of demeanour, with that serene, confident, and cold glance of the eye, all indicate a life of freedom in the wilds, without the tyranny of irresponsible chieftainship, and the thraldom of a legal code.

We cannot close the notice of their physical aspect without allusion to the rite of circumcision among them. This is found only, as far as at present known, on the northern side of the continent and in South Australia; at North-west Cape and the Gulf of Carpentaria in the North; at Port Lincoln and the Great Bight to the South, though not extending to King George's Sound. Some say that the great lizard, Yura, now in Wodli Purri, or the Milky Way, first introduced the practice. It is remarkable that this rite, existing once among the ancient Egyptians and Ethiopians, and identified with the Jewish, Mahometan, and other forms of faith, should be retained among a people so isolated as these.

The time of the performance of the ceremony differs somewhat among the tribes; but as one of the modes of initiation to mankind, it is seldom delayed beyond the thirteenth or fourteenth year. Among the Bechuanas and the Kaffirs south of the Zambesi, Dr. Livingstone saw the second part of the initiation performed upon boys of fourteen, when the victims were severely struck with rods, scarring their backs for life; but the real ceremony takes place at the age of eight. At Port Lincoln, South Australia, the incision extends towards the navel. The observance is conducted with great secrecy in the forest, and in the absence of females. The boy is first beaten with green boughs, and then sprinkled with blood from the arm of a warrior. Laid upon the ground, and covered with dust, he is raised from his dry baptism by the ears, amidst great rejoicing. Some men lie down upon the grass for an altar, upon which the act is performed by the doctor of the tribe, and a secret name given. There is a remarkable coincidence between these ceremonies and the religious rites of the ancient Egyptians.

INTELLIGENCE.

Much misapprehension exists as to the mental position of the aborigines. Mr. Westgarth truly says: "The untutored savage shines with a lustre of his own, which appears so much superior, as in others it is manifestly inferior in comparison with civilised man." The skill they exhibit in hunting and tracking their way through the forest, excites the astonishment of the white men. The development of their perceptive faculties corresponds with their extraordinary power of sight and touch, with mechanical ingenuity and dexterity. Though not students of Euclid, Locke, or Herschel, they

Digitized by Google

exhibit in their own way a practical sense of reasoning and propriety of judgment, as led Sir Thomas Mitchell to exclaim, "They are as apt and intelligent as any other race of men I am acquainted with." We may at least believe, with Mr. Guardian Thomas, that "Providence has endowed them with sufficient intelligence for their present state;" or with the learned Archbishop Polding, of New South Wales, when he told the Legislature, "I have no reason to think them much lower than ourselves in many respects." Mr. Ridley, the missionary, says: "In forethought and what phrenologists call 'concentrativeness,' they are very deficient; in mental acumen, and in quickness of sight and hearing, they surpass most white people"

It is unfair to gauge their intelligence by the aptness for civilised life. Because their traditions, habits, inclinations, and necessities do not dispose them to accept of the so-called blessings of civilisation, they have been styled brutish, human monkeys, and irreclaimable savages. It is a striking fact that the wild native often evidences a higher grade of intellect than is to be found among the dissipated associates of the Europeans. Mr. Burke, whom we had the pleasure of knowing at Mount Shadwell, bears this testimony before the Committee of Council upon the aborigines, in 1858: "I believe," says he, "the intelligence of the race has been much misunderstood. The introduction of civilisation has not tended to develope their character advantageously; but, on the contrary, they have suffered a moral and physical degradation, which has reacted upon their intellectual powers. Had we been able to reclaim them from barbarism without subjecting them to the temptation of evils which have enslaved them, we should have found them an intelligent race."

Where the youths have been placed at school along with those of our own race, they have not been slow in the acquisition of knowledge. Having had, at various times, some of the young people at our table, we can bear witwitness to the shrewdness of their observations, and their pleasure in receiving information. Having repeatedly addressed them when assembled in school, we have not remarked a laxity of attention, a torpidity of mind, or a want of sympathy with the subject of address. Mr. Protector Parker went perhaps too far in saying, "They are just as capable of receiving instruction, just as capable of mental exercises as any more favoured race." It is certain that they learn to read and write with facility, but they never accomplish much in arithmetic. As engaged for many years in tuition, we must admit that we never had our patience so tried as when endeavouring to give native lads some conception of number.

They are naturally indolent, and care not to exert themselves for anything in which they are not interested, and in which they perceive no possibility of personal advantage. With oral lessons we have found them quite delighted, especially if a little fun be thrown into the exercise. We have been, on several occasions, interrupted in our lecture by loud bursts of merriment, accompanied by spasmodic action of legs and arms, when something had been said which excited their love for the comical. In geography they take much pleasure. An aboriginal boy, in the Normal School of Sydney, carried off the prize for geography from all his white compeers. Mr. Thomas speaks highly of their capacity for language, and says:—"They pronounce English far better than half the Scotch or Irish emigrants." Barrington's hopes of them seventy years ago have not yet been realised. Then he remarked:—"We have a right to presume that, when equally enlightened, they may become equally possessed of those refined qualifications which at present render Europeans their superiors."

CHARACTER.

Respecting the character of our dark friends, opinions differ as about their intellect. The disciples of Rousseau beheld them faultless, and spoke of them as gentle, virtuous children of nature. On the other hand, some apply to them the foulest epithets. The English author of a work upon the colonies, published in 1852, writes this disgraceful passage:—"They have every bad quality which humanity should not possess, and many of which their congener, the baboon, would be ashamed." It is satisfactory, at least, to find that those who knew them best in their wild state, uncontaminated by contact with the whites, cherish a higher estimate of their worth. The most chivalrous advocate for the poor Australian might safely leave their defence in the hands of such men as Sturt, Mitchell, Leichhardt, and Grey. It was a noble testimony which the last named explorer bore to his old bush-companions:—"In their intercourse with each other I have generally found the natives speak the truth, and act with honesty." Could as much be said for all civilised communities?

In calling them savages, we must not associate the idea of rudeness with their character. All travellers agree in describing them as having such a natural sense of politeness, as greatly distinguishes them, according to Sir Thomas Mitchell, above the

Digitized by Google

peasant class of Britain. They often exhibit great delicacy of feeling and sense of propriety. We were once passing some native huts, when a lot of rude boys came up, looked impertinently within, and made use of very unpleasant expressions. Instead of a rough repulse, which the young rascals well deserved, this was the reproof administered: "What for you do the like o' that! No do that. When blackfellow sit down with whitefellow, him say, 'Be off, be off;' blackfellow no do the like o' that."

Their good temper, according to Mr. Eyre, the courageous overlander, is a remarkable feature. Certainly their merriment in the evening is one continual carnival. Their camp is a thorough home of buffoonery and laughter. Without the conventional decorum and restraint of our civilised society, without our jealousies and punctilious observances, they gambol with the freedom of roystering children. Without bills to meet, or position to sustain, we cannot be surprised to learn that suicide is unknown among them. Society does not tolerate the "happy despatch" of the Chinese, the knot of the English, or the charcoal fumes of Parisians.

The affections of our common nature are in lively exercise among them. They will always generously divide with each other anything given them by Europeans. The social relations are strictly observed. Respect to age is rigidly enforced. The condition of the old men of a tribe is honourable, gratifying and flattering; for their counsels are treated with attention, they marry the young wives, and they may eat what they please.

Unbounded is the indulgence given to the little ones. Even the poor lubras, in spite of an occasional hasty waddying, lead no very miserable life, if one may judge by their incessant fun and chatting. The family bonds are cherished with much affection. A man was seen tending his sick wife with great solicitude. He lifted her into his lap, and soothing her against his shoulder as a mother would a child. A Murray black was remarked rubbing up an old pannikin which had belonged to his deceased wife. Being asked what he intended to do with it, he mentioned his intention to carry it to her brother at Moorundie, on the river, adding, "Then him plenty cry." We have repeatedly witnessed kind attentions among them, and the distress of a family when a death occurred. After the burial of his wife, an old man was observed sitting by the camp fire in a state of abstraction of grief. Presently a married daughter arrived from a distance. The bereaved husband rose up, fell upon her neck, and shed a torrent of tears, amidst the heartily expressed sympathy of the tribe.

We were much pleased with a family scene which we witnessed in the colony some seven years ago. Having ridden a considerable distance in the bush, without a track, guided by the sun towards our destination, we were not sorry to come at last upon a couple of wirlies, as we wished for more certain knowledge of our whereabouts. Two or three fine-looking young fellows were lounging on the grass. A lubra within was stitching a garment for a rosy-cheeked half-caste, who lay snugly asleep in the warmest corner. An old man, who bore upon his ample chest a brass plate, with the inscription of "Coc Coc Coine, king of the Warrions," sat beside the smouldering native fire. Before him, as if about to take farewell of him, was a really handsome young man, with a most ingenuous countenance, clad in good European clothing, and with a dashing pair of patent leather boots on. He held by the bridle a spirited-looking horse.

That which first struck our attention was the smile of gratified affection upon the face of the white bearded patriarch, as he listened to the words of the Anglicised aborigine before him. With the compliments of the day to the old man, we turned our conversation to the young one. It was not long before we got the family narrative.

Coc Coc Coine, junior, had come on a visit to his father, mother, sister, and brothers. Able to speak tolerable English, he informed us, as we rode along afterwards together, that the day before, he had come fifty miles, with three days' leave of absence from his master. No son could more highly extol the virtues of his parent. The old man was evidently an object of profound reverence as well as affection. The panegyric was wound up with the exclamation—"He good old man; he never drink—no rum, no beer, no brandy." Delighted as we were with this exhibition of filial attachment, we were even more gratified to observe a recognition of his temperance as an additional reason for esteem.

Yet there is a darker shade to the native character. The sons of a fallen race, they are our brethren in natural depravity. The eye that beams with such tenderness at one time will kindle with the fiercest rage at another. Though not, according to Governor Grey, a blood-thirsty race,—never, even in their wars, carrying national hatred to the extent, as among civilised people, of slaughtering helpless women and children,—they are sometimes vindictively treacherous. Their transitions of feeling are rapid: now tranquil and soft as an Australian eve, and again violent and destructive as the stormy typhoon. But there is one good feature in their anger, that it is seldom lasting. No

Digitized by Google

fight takes place without a joyous corrobbory of the combatants at its close, and a profuse demonstration of sympathy for the wounded foe.

But the existence of the crime of infanticide among them, though plenty of apologies are pleaded for its continuance, is a dark blot upon their character. Other evils, as swearing and intemperance, are to be attributed to their connection with civilised life. Under the influence of drink, their worst passions, as with the whites, are called forth into malignant action. To this paralysing curse of society, above all others, may be traced, not only the decline of numbers among the native race, but the rapid deterioration of their character. As long as drink can be obtained, the philanthropist despairs of seeing any amelioration of their moral condition.

CLOTHING AND ORNAMENTS.

Generally speaking the Australian aborigines prefer the absence of dress. Tacitus refers to the German tribes spending whole days before the fire altogether naked. An old writer says of the Macarongas, "They go naked, men and women, without shame." So do the Doko of South Abyssinia, and the Shilukh of the Upper Nile. The ancient Caledonians of Scotland are described by the Romans thus: "They live in tents, without shoes, and naked." Governor Hunter thus mentions his glance at the natives of Jervis Bay, New South Wales, in 1789: "They were all perfectly naked, except one young fellow, who had a bunch of grass fastened round his waist, which came up behind like the tail of a kangaroo." The Adamites of Holland considered clothing a sign of an unconverted nature; therefore they worshipped in a naked state. An attempt to exhibit their principles in public brought annoyance to their persons and extinguished their sect. In cold weather, the opossum or kangaroo skin rug, neatly sewed with sinews or a kind of grass, is thrown around their persons. The substitution of this by the lazy blanket is no improvement. On the sea coast, garments have been worked out of rushes and seaweed.

Their ornaments are simple, and not so regarded as among other people. There is rather an indifference than otherwise to indulgence in finery; though it may arise from public opinion, and the fear of ridicule. The feathers of the swan, emu, cockatoo, &c., adorn them on grand occasions; when the hair is sometimes studded with the teeth of kangaroos and claws of birds, as among the American Indians, with strings of pieces of small reed around their necks. The Gheysiquas make necklaces of sheep's trotters. The women are deemed sufficiently beautiful without such silly appendages; they have no auxiliaries to their native charms. The men even appropriate to themselves alone the curl and ochre band; though both sexes have cicatrices or raised scars. The Mosaical injunction, "Nor print any mark upon you," may thus apply to our natives. The Tattoo proper belongs to the New Zealanders.

Upon this subject Barrington observed, in 1802:—"This custom has been found among most of the uncivilised nations inhabiting warm countries, and probably owes its origin to a total want of mental resources and of the employment of time." These tattoo scars are called Manka in South Australia. Those upon females are slighter than upon men; some of the latter have fantastical resemblances to stars and other objects. The cut is first made with a flint or bone, water is spirted into the wound, which is kept open for some days, so as to form the required ridges of flesh. The Japanese men tattoo extensively, but the women are free from its practice.

The cartilage of the nose is often bored to receive sticks, grass, &c.; though the ears are not stretched as with the Ulietea Islanders. The nasal hole is kept distended with a bone. Thin round stems of withered grass are inserted, fresh ones being brought until the right size is obtained. Much suffering is endured in the process,—as the Chinese with feet, and Europeans with waists. A small bone from the leg of a kangaroo supplies the place of the grass when the wound is healed. In early days the women painted their noses red and their breasts red and white alternately. The teeth are let alone, except on the Sydney side, when two front ones were knocked out in the work of manmaking; but they do not, like the Malays, and the Makuas of East Africa, file their teeth; nor, like the ladies of the Zambesi, knock out the front teeth of the upper jaw, so as not to resemble zebras. The lips are undisturbed; they do not, like some South American Indians, make a hole in the lower one to receive a block of wood; nor, like the Maravi of South America, pierce the upper lip and insert a shell, so as to resemble the Australian Platypus.

The head is sometimes adorned with bunches of emu feathers. Men occasionally wear coverlets of feathers or tassels of opossum yarn. This is made by twisting a cross-shaped spindle on the thigh of the female, while the shaft is turned by the hands. Women, upon some special seasons, dance before the men, rubbed all over with

Digitized by Google

emu fat and ochre, with only an apron of emu feathers. The hair receives great attention from the males, who will, in some parts, tie it up into form with fur or string, though not so ridiculously as the Batoka, who thrust up a cone of hair a yard in height; nor, like Indians, stiffen it with paint and grease into a sort of cock's-comb. Though the women shave their heads in grief, the men never part with their hair. They scent it with no odoriferous wood-powder, as the Namaquas, nor defile it with the liquor used by Greenland wives, but content themselves with emu fat.

Captain Hunter, afterwards Governor of New South Wales, thus records a visit to a black encampment, about 1790, exhibiting the love of finery in Port Jackson seventy years ago:—"They were all Adams and Eves," he tells us, "without even a fig-leaf, but without their dignity. The young women were employed with all their art in painting the young men, who were chiefly ornamented with white, done with pipeclay, and in different forms, according to the taste of the young man himself, or that of the lady who adorned him. No fop preparing for an assembly was ever more desirous of making his person irresistibly beautiful. This paint could not be employed without a little moisture, and the lady in drawing these marks upon the face, which were so essential a part of the decoration, I have seen frequently to spit in the face of her friend whom she was adorning, in order to make the white clay mark the stronger."

HOMES.

Their dwellings are not substantial. Continually roving about in search for food, they cannot trouble about such erections; and, generally, in so fine a climate as this, they have little requirement for them. A very early writer on New Holland humorously tells us that "their ignorance of building is amply compensated by the kindness of nature, in the remarkable softness of the rocks," so that they can easily construct caves. A few sticks and boughs;—some branches against a fallen tree;—or the breakwind of an opossum rug, are about all they desire. Tacitus says the Finns slept on the ground. The Hare Indians live without shelter. Sir T. Mitchell speaks of bower huts under trees and flowers, in North Australia, whose appearance did great credit to the builders,—the Gins. The Pinos of California have a dome-shaped hut of wickerwork, with an arbour front. When once questioning the blacks about their frequent change of abode, one answered, "No good stop long there—too much plenty flea." Sometimes, the wirlie, gunya, or mia mia is framed of reeds or sticks, and covered with boughs, bark, grass, rags, or old clothes; it is occasionally made to turn round, so as to suit the change of wind. Where food is plentiful, as at Cooper's Creek, &c., the huts are better built. Mr. Protector Robinson, on his first visit to the wild tribes of Lake Hindmarsh, found some of this character, which he thus describes: "Large and well constructed habitations shaped in the form of a span roof, thatched with reeds, pleasantly situated on the verge of a pond, was quite unique, and highly creditable to the skill and industry of the native artisans." When near Mount Napier he came upon thirteen large huts of wood covered with turf. Trenches 500 yards long led to extensive intercourses. "The whole," says he, "covered an area of about ten acres, and must have been done at great cost of labour to the aborigines."

FOOD AND COOKING.

There was no want of adequate nutrition for our natives before the advent of the whites; and even now, especially with their diminished numbers, there is enough and to spare. In some districts certain descriptions of food are now scarce, and the invasion of the hunting grounds of another tribe is a cause of strife. The animal world, roots, seeds, and fruits, are indifferently taken. But they had certain strict regulations about these. Thus, children might eat anything before they are ten years of age. Then, boys might not eat the kangaroo, nor the female and young of any kind. Young females were not to partake of the crane, bandicoot, male wallaby, emu, and native companion. Young men were prohibited black ducks, cranes, emus, eagles, snakes, wallabies and the young from the pouch; the seniors tell them that if they do eat of these, sores will break out all over their bodies. Married men till forty years old must not taste the emu, crane, eagle, and native companion. The adult female could not eat of the male opossum, wallaby, emu, red kangaroo, and snakes. No females were to eat of fish caught under the cliffs to which they retired to spawn. Women in a certain state had to consume more vegetables. The old folks ate what they liked. These rules have lapsed since the aborigines' decline and change of habits.

They were not wanting in dainties, besides ducks and geese. There were delicious sausages of fat, placed in the entrails of the pelican, which were passed round the circle for individual sucking. The loap, or manna,

Digitized by Google

causes quite a festival in its season. The favourite Myrnong root, of a radish character, has been much destroyed by our sheep. The word Myrnong means *hand*, from the resemblance of the tuberous bunch to the fingers of the hand. It is cooked, like other roots, in the ashes, or on heated stones. The roasting of some poisonous seeds and roots makes them wholesome. The karko stick with a hook fishes up the luscious grubs from their wooden caverns. The grub has a nutty flavour. Leichhardt, the traveller, says—"It tastes very well, particularly in chewing the skin, which contains much fat." We have known Anglo-Australian boys very fond of picking out grubs from old fallen timber. We eat oysters, but refuse grubs. A whale cast upon the shore is a thorough Lord Mayor's feast. Neighbouring tribes would make friendly overtures, and there would be nothing but cut and come again. Capt. Lyons tells us that he gave an Esquimaux 40 lbs. of seal's flesh for a day's feed; we do not think that an Australian's appetite is quite so voracious, but he made the whale's visit the occasion of a gorge, and carried off masses of the half-putrid flesh as a present to his inland acquaintances. Mr. Liddy, who had the first garden on Melbourne Eastern Hill, found the sable strangers fond of the cabbage, but without a relish for the potato.

Wild honey hunting is a favourite pursuit. The bee is much smaller than the domestic one. The native sees the little creature when very high in the air, and skilfully follows it to its rocky or branchlet home. The lubra, tomahawk in hand, ascends the cliff or tree, notching her way to the nest, with reed basket or calabash for the honey. The flowers of some shrubs, which have a sweet taste, are eaten. The ends of grass-tree roots; the tops of palms; with berries of many varieties, constitute articles of diet. A large kind of moth, Booyong, is caught upon the rocks of Gipps Land, and smoked. But kangaroos and opossums form the staple food of the Australians. Vegetables are but little used in any state. Meat is largely eaten also by Europeans in this country; for, though the climate is hot, the air is dry and salubrious, like the fine plateau land of Southern Central Africa; of which Livingstone writes:—"A considerable portion of animal diet seems requisite here; no bad effects, in the way of biliousness, followed the free use of flesh, as in other hot climates. A vegetable diet causes acidity and heartburn." The Australians drank only water, "Till," as Mr. Thomas says, "the white man introduced cursed rum, which has caused double the number to die by the visitation of the devil to those who die by the visitation of God."

The native cook was pronounced by Mitchell and others to be no despicable *artiste*. Innocent of lucifers and the veteran sulphur matches, the aborigine procured fire from friction of two pieces of wood, called by some "Thaal Kalk," or sounding sticks. We were confidently informed that the proper material came from the mountains, "All the same apple tree." One piece was three or four feet long, and the other much shorter. In the first, about the middle, a hole was made, and partially filled with dry bark reduced to a fine powder. Fixing one end of the larger stick against a tree for support, and holding the other end in his hand, the native rapidly moved the other pointed stick among the bark particles in the hole until smoke appeared. The Marquesan islander has a somewhat similar method; but he mounts astride one stick, while he rubs the other up and down the first until a groove be made. He quickens his motion, until fire issues from the dusty particles which the friction creates at the end of the groove.

The lazy mode of cookery is by pitching the meat on the live embers. But they cook splendidly by steam. The meat or fish is laid at the bottom of a hole upon a heated stone, and covered with clean grass. A stick stands upright upon this, while the earth is thrown into the hole. Then, extracting the stick, water is poured down upon the stone, and the steam raised is kept within. The meat is sometimes laid in hollow bark to save the gravy, in the same way as the North Australians bake their turtles in the shell. A capital dish is prepared by putting the fish upon wet grass resting on the hot ashes, in alternate layers, to the top of the hole. Eggs are cooked in ashes. Ants' eggs are roasted on bark slips. Though it is usual to cast the opossum or kangaroo whole upon the fire, the intestines are always extracted when warmed through; these were then washed, dressed separately, and reserved as the choice morsel for a friend, or the individual capturer of the game.

HUNTING.

Without monetary cares, without the necessity of heavy toil for the maintenance of his family, the Australian native has a comfortable life. His lubra gathers roots, and when it suits him, rather for pastime than necessity, he takes his spear, boomerang, or waddy, and soon returns with a bountiful supply. Fancying an opossum, he cuts notches in the bark for his toes with a stone hatchet, quickly ascends the lofty tree, examines a hole or two in decaying limbs, twists out a fellow by the tail, and hurls him down to the dogs below.

Digitized by Google

Both the emu and wild turkey are very shy, and difficult of approach. Our dark brothers, therefore, have stealthily to approach them under cover of a large green bush. One Yarra blackfellow gave us a capital description of catching the turkey :—Armed with a long rod, having a noose at the end, and a little bird fastened to the top, the hunter in the moving bush nears the victim. The silly fowl walks up to the struggling captive, and pecks at him. The adroit savage watches his opportunity, and judiciously turns his rod to entrap and strangle his prize. The turkey is quietly removed, and the bait is successful with a mate. The pretty lyre bird is more awake, and must be waddied down. Boys practise throwing at birds with a wooden instrument three feet long, terminating in an elongated egg shaped knob, which has been charred to harden it. The young urchins are expert in snoozing the wide awake Wood pigeon.

The net is an important feature in hunting, some nets being one hundred yards long. Those to entrap kangaroos on their way home along their tracks are made out of the bullrush root. Other nets are of bark or of the Wongul root. The fibres are separated by mastication. The netting needle is like a lead pencil, and round it the string is wound. No mesh is used. The string of fibres rubbed on the lubra's thigh becomes a material as neat as whipcord. The Goulburn blacks have fishing nets of a sort of grass. The Yarra tribe fish with the spear. The Murray men seek their finny friends at night, when a whole fleet may be seen, with a fire of fragrant wood in the prow of their boats. The canoe is of bark, softened by fire and moulded to the shape, which is afterwards maintained until hardened by props to keep the sides apart. Such a vessel will not preserve its equilibrium without difficulty ; but every native is nearly amphibious. The Murray blacks have ingenious modes of catching the waterfowl. We have seen them prowling among the reeds. A long stick with a noose projects through their ambush, and hangs over the water a tempting object. Sometimes they keep under water breathing through a reed, and draw down the ducks floating above. Or, they will float down the stream with their heads enveloped in a thick bush of leaves, until they fall in with a quacking party. Occasionally they dive down with a light spear, feel in the holes for a fish, and fix him. The hunting grounds of a tribe are known by well marked physical features in a country. Incantations are often resorted to when a grand chase is to take place.

SONGS AND DANCES.

When approaching a native camp in the evening, the traveller's ear is saluted with the monotonous tune of some forest ditty, now soft and slow, and then rapid and vehement. Without the squall and frightful time of a London ballad singer, it wants variety of cadence and intelligibility of language to suit our taste. Yet the sound is not without musical power. Simple as the notes are, they have an influence upon an excitable people, soothing their passions, arousing their vengeance, or enkindling their desire. The self-congratulations of the tuneful circle are not foreign to the self-satisfied nod of the village chorister, after the *execution* of Handel or the *doing* of Bishop. If not attracted by their harmony we are not repelled by their discord. Their measure is admirably maintained. The knocking of two sticks performs the office of Hullah's clap, and Jullien's baton. The crescendo and diminuendo, the andante and allegro, are indicated and followed with accuracy and taste. Ignorance of their speech prevents the due appreciation of their lyrics. Dr. Lang, in his learned ethnological work upon the South Sea islanders, gives the following story. "A Scotch clergyman," says he, "who was settled some time ago in the interior of the colony, and who has studied the language of the aborigines, has assured me that a black native has on one occasion repeated to him a poem, descriptive of a war-like expedition against some hostile tribe, extending to not fewer than fifteen stanzas, and evincing poetical feeling to a considerable degree." The blacks are fond of introducing some fun about Europeans present at their games in an improvisation. When a native was first shown a musical box, the buzzing sound made him cry out, "Mosquito sit down here, I bleve."

Some writers, as Governor Grey, Mr. Howitt and others, have given us translations, or embodied poetic sentiments of the natives in a pleasing manner. We will only venture to give two of these of local interest. One by Mr. Richard Howitt, composed in 1840, entitled "Tullamarine," giving name to a district of the county of Bourke. The other is taken from Mr. Allen's *South Australian Magazine* for 1842, and refers to a tradition of an overflow of the Murray River.

TULLAMARINE.

Tullamarine, thou lovely flower,
I saw thee in a happy hour ;
When first I gazed upon my boy,
I saw thee with a mother's joy.

Methought thy beauty on me smiled ;
And by thy name I called my child :

Digitized by Google

And thence alike with joy were seen,
Both boy and flower, Tullamarine.

The lights in heaven appear, and go:
Both stars and flowers their seasons know:
Thus, in thy season, thou art seen,
Sweet earthly star, Tullamarine.

Soother of many a weary hour,
By mountain stream, in forest bower:
I gathered thee with choicest care,
And wore thee fondly in my hair.

Wide wandering through the woods away,
Where with thy bloom the ground was gay,
I called thee then the "flower of joy,"
Sweet namesake of my darling boy.

He grew, he flourished by my side,
He ran, he gathered thee with pride;
But, woe is me! in evil hour
Death stole away my human flower.

I wonder in my sorrow's night,
My star is emptied of its light;
Thou, flower of joy, art changed to grief,
Thy dews, my tears are on thy leaf.

Therefore do I behold in vain,
Thy beauty, look on it with pain;
I see thee with an inward groan,
Because I look on thee, alone.

All things my sorrow seem to share,
There broods a sadness on the air,—
There hangs a gloom along the sky,
My boy is dead, and thou shouldst die.

Now for the joy which long I had.
The sight of thee must make me sad;
So in my path no more be seen,
But—deck his grave, Tullamarine.

THE MURRAY TRADITION.

They believe that many years ago their own tribe, with numerous others, lived in the interior towards the N.N.E., where there was abundance of gum-trees, opossums, and fresh water; that the sorcerers of the land of Toolcoon, a neighbouring country, set the bush on fire, the flames of which spread in all directions, driving the natives before it, and destroyed many tribes. Corna, the progenitor of the Murray tribes, was on the point of perishing, with his family, when the Murray burst from a cleft in the ground and extinguished the flames around them. It flowed on, till it came to the sea, and has ever since formed a barrier to the fire extending across the continent, as it did once in ancient times. Whether this story has any foundation in the facts of former ages, it would be vain to attempt to determine, but it is evidently based on natural causes now in existence, and in extensive operation.

TARRUNKIE.

Where is the light and the father of days,
Whither has black night his burning face driven?
Was it quenched in the ocean, that drank up his rays,
Or again will he glide through the regions of heaven?

CHERABOC.

Far off, on Parnka's* distant side,
Where the lake mingles with the sky,
And farthest hills the banks divide,
Where Murray flows majestic'ly:
Mark thou the brighter shades that spread,
And break the blending mists in twain,—
Chase the dull clouds from Parnka's bed,
And lift morn's eyelid up again!

'Tis the sunshine,
His gleam is there:
Night doth resign
The realms of air!

POMEBIE.

The swan doth rise on heavy wing,
And shrilly pipes his morning note,—
The meroles† from the she-oak sing,
The ducks from lake-side slowly float:
The wary cranes of snowy white
Do look around with care,
And pelicans at every height
Wing circles in the air;
The bittern booms, the blue-bird calls
His mate, with flaming crest:
The dew from every leaflet falls,
Whereon a bird did rest.

ALL.

Then let us join the happy throng:
Come, rise up black men all,
And, with the merry birds of song,
Respond to nature's call!

TARRUNKIE.

Long did our fathers wander through
The lofty gum-trees' shade,
And marked the yearly falling strew
The soil, where it had stayed
Unmoved for long, long years,
Weeping its blood-red tears.

An old wife, breathless fled and came
Upon their paths, pressed by the flame
Of the bush fire, which ran,
And the hot winds did fan
Close after her, and crackled round,
Sweeping the forest to the ground,
With crash on crash; and fire and smoke
Followed her steps. And thus she spoke:

"Up, Corna,‡ up, and fly with me,
Thy children, and thy wife;
If, haply, we may reach the sea,
And save our perilled life.

* Lake Victoria.
† Native magpies.
‡ Corna signifies black man.

Digitized by Google

"From Toolcoon's distant land I come,
Where fiery spirits dwell,
Who have destroyed my tribe, my home,—
And seek our race to quell.

"Though many tribes of men I've passed
That scorn my hurried word,
Yet, as the flames did follow fast,
Their dying shrieks I heard.

"Thine, Corna, is the only race
The angry fiends can spare,
Then, up, and with thy quickest pace,
By flight, my safety share."

Corna left spear and shield, and fled;
Each lubra seized a son,
The father took two girls and sped,
Whither their guide did run.

The sea was very far away;
Although they quickly fly,
Faster the flames pursued, and they
Thought only but to die.

The old wife, faint and weary grown
Fell down a tree beneath,
And yielding up a heavy groan,
She ceased, thenceforth, to breathe.

Whither shall Corna fly—for weak,
His lubras slowly crawl?
What place of refuge shall he seek
Against that fiery wall?

The smoke, the old wife's form concealed,
The fire came swiftly on,
The flames did reach the brain, he reeled,
And Corna's sense was gone.

A form rose from the kindled grass,
Where the old wife had died,
And, through the burning woods did pass,
Till Corna she espied.

She stamped upon the ground, a flood
Burst from the heated soil,
Which, round about the blazing wood,
Began to hiss and boil.

The water rose, the earth did cool,
The old wife, in her hand
Took up a little from the pool,
And sprinkled on the band.

"Corna, my son, arise, and live!
These waters, far and wide,
To thee, and to thy sons I give,
To dwell, their banks beside.

"Toolcoon shall ne'er pursue, or burn
Thee, or any children more,
This river back its flames shall turn,
E'er they approach thy shore.

"Here is a tiny, barken boat,
Thou, with a spear, mayst guide;
Fear not, but it will safely float,
And launch it on the tide.

"Do thou, the downward stream pursue,
Until thou well canst hear
The roar of ocean, or thy view
Of its blue waves be clear.

"That is thy land, this river there
Will spread abroad its waves:
Thine and thy children's home, where'er
Its seaward current laves.

"There make thy paths, and every child
Will follow in thy track,
But shun the inland scrubby wild
That teems with shadows black.

"The fish, that sport with shining scale,
And all the beasts that drink!
And birds, that gaily fly and sail
About the reedy brink.

"There are enough for thee to eat!
So climb not in the tree,
That may deceive thy careful feet,
Or bruise thy active knee.

"Give thou unto this stream my name
Parnka, Ooroondooil's own;
And when a man disputes thy claim,
Show him this charmed stone.

"His sight will fail, and dark as night,
His blighted orbs will roll,
Until he owns my Corna's right,
And Parnka's high control."

Corna sailed down the rapid stream,
For many, many miles;
At length he saw wide waters gleam,
And cliffs that loomed like isles.

The current swiftly swept across;
His bark upon the lake
Did roughly on the billows toss,
And every fibre shake.

Till as he drew the heights between,
That form the western head,
From whence the sandy hills are seen,
That rise from ocean's bed.

He heard the roar upon the beach,
He saw the breakers' haze,
He turned his bark, in haste, to reach
A hill, to mount and gaze.

'Neath Taipang's crag, the weary man
Brought in his light canoe;
Himself and lubras cramped and wan,
Their legs they hardly knew.

Corna sat down beside his fire,
And here, upon this rock,
Was the first wurly of our sire.
The cradle of our stock.

Dancing is associated with social gatherings and religious worship. There have been sacred dances among the Egyptians, Greeks, Buddhists, Jews, Mahometans, and Christians. Whatever connection some dances of the Australian natives may have originally had with idolatrous ceremonies, we are sure that the spirit of them has long since departed. We have our Kangaroo dance, Emu dance, Frog dance, &c. The ancient Celts held moonlight corroborics. Layard witnessed a night dance among the devil worshippers of Assyria. The Dyaks of Borneo have a similar practice with our aborigines. The Indians of America, like these, terminated their dances with a loud "Waugh!"

Digitized by Google

But a simple sketch of the author's observations of a Corrobory may interest those who arrive in the colony, to behold a scattered, deteriorated, spiritless, and decimated people.

The moon is full; and the hills which had glared in the noontide heat, and sympathised with the declining sun in varying hues of gold, of purple, and of ashy grey, now sleep in the soft and soothing light. The laughing jackass has caroled his farewell note, when from the valley there rises a strange, mysterious sound. We go nearer;—there, amidst that dusky mass, we distinguish the plaintive chant, the tapping of time-sticks, and the muffled murmur of opossum-rug drums. Various companies are sitting round small fires, which are occasionally bursting into blaze as dry boughs or a few leaves are laid on the embers. Women have folded their rugs and placed them between their thighs, and now beat them with the open palm of their hand. Some are seated cross-legged, singing a mournful dirge, with their eyes downward, and with a melancholy aspect. There is no interruption, for the tune subdues the loquacity of the loquacious tribe. A livelier air succeeds; the old men beat their sticks quicker, the tum tum is louder, the eyes brighten, a laugh now and then interludes, the prattling begins, and with the last sharp, shrill chord rushes in a tumult of noisy merriment.

But the corrobory is to begin. Certain important-looking old gentlemen are gliding about, consulting and giving directions about the fête. The performers see that the pipe-clay lines of beauty upon their bodies are in proper order, redaubing where necessary. After an amount of fussing, coquetting, fidgetting, and confusion, worthy of a more civilised reunion, there is a fall to places. The ladies squat near the fires, clear their throats for a song, and give an extra tightening to their drums. The old men sit or stand in groups. The young men spring blithely into the centre, accompanied by an involuntary Ha! Ha! of admiration from the throng of ebon beauties. Some little bantering passages between the sexes are silenced by the seniors, in growls from their white-haired lords, and spiteful snappings from the shrivelled hags of mammas. Silence is called. The ranks are formed. The moon's beams rest upon the naked performers. With bunches of gum leaves in their hands, and others round their ankles, like flying Mercuries, the dancing men are ready. The band strikes up. Slowly moving their bodies from side to side, the young men gracefully and tremulously move their hands to the measure. At a signal, the legs commence a similar motion, having a most grotesque and unnatural appearance. The flesh of the thigh and calf is seen quivering in an extraordinary manner. This excites deep interest in the spectators. Exclamations of delight issue from the eager witnesses of the performance, at some peculiarly charming and difficult wriggling of limb. After sundry chasseeing, the men break their line, rush together in a mass, without disorder or confusion, leap upward in the air, wave their boughs over their head, utter a loud "Waugh," and, bursting into laughter, join in a melée of chattering, and receive the hearty congratulations of their friends. Some of the enthusiastic females persist in grasping our hand, and pointing to the distinguished actors, with a roguish, merry leer, crying out, "Bery good that corrobory; bery good blackfellow; you gib him tixpence?"

Bathed in perspiration, the young men obtain a drink, stretch themselves upon the dewy grass, and take a *spell*. But the ancients have arranged for another dance, of a different movement from the other, and the *stand-up* process is re-enacted. The interest is renewed, and the lady of night floats on her silvery way over a great arch of the heavens, before the corrobory is over, the wirlie filled, and the dancer at rest.

Occasionally they have a pretty game, something like our *hoop*. One will take a tuft of emu feathers in his hand, and go off to a little distance. Then, holding aloft the feathers, he would plunge into the forest, or dodge among the women, pursued by a lot of young men. Now and then the shaking of the trophy would be seen in the twilight shade, as the bearer managed to elude observation, and again came into view. Tumultuous mirth followed the successful capture.

A young fellow is noticed led by two others into the camp. The evidence of intense agony, as from some terrible accident, is as strong on the form of the one, as that of sympathising solicitude on the features of the others, while tenderly supporting their friend. The camp fires are deserted, and anxious faces gather round the group; when all at once the lame man leaps up with a whirr—r—, his carriers burst into laughter at the success of the deception, and a long and pleasant yabber is the result. The dances of the women are intended for the amusement of the other sex, and are not more remarkable for chaste propriety than the celebrations of some more refined communities. They are simply clad in an apron of emu feathers. The flapping of their long pendant breasts serves to beat time. The Seah Posh of India have the sexes dancing separately. Mr. Hunter saw women dance with men at Port Jackson in 1789. He speaks of "a great deal of variety in their

Digitized by Google

different dances, in one of which they paired themselves, and frequently danced back to back." They often dance in doubled and tripled changing lines.

One of the finest corrobories was witnessed by the Hon. Wm. Hull, on April 22, 1845, when a party of 800 visited Melbourne at the full moon. A huge edifice (if so it may be called) of stringy bark branches was constructed, and divers rude hieroglyphics were daubed by the old men, who alone penetrated within this Adytum. In the morning nothing was to be seen. A superior corrobory took place in 1839, on the Eastern Hill, opposite to the site of the *Argus* office. Another curious performance, with a dim shadowing of meaning, was witnessed in 1842. Fifty men, with bunches of leaves reeled in serpentine motion, hissing as they went. Their arms were laid over the shoulders of others, while they sang a mysterious song. Arrived at a certain place, they all set up a "Waugh," and ran full speed back to the wirlies. A new line was formed, and new decorations prepared. Wands were placed in their hands, ornamented with the down of cockatoos and green boughs. A series of singular boundings succeeded, with the aforesaid hissing. Again the whole party of dancers and singers were observed in rapid flight toward the creek, yelling and hallooing on the road. They halted at a bark hut, on the sides of which were ochre drawings in the shape of shields. After other rapid evolutions, they threw their wands upon the roof, with air-rending cries. The white men were told that this was not a corrobory, but a *Gageed*.

Mr. Parker gives an account of a *Yepene*, or Dance of Death, upon the Loddon. It is a movement beneath boughs. A solemn lengthened silence is then maintained in the darkness of night. A sudden exclamation of joy, with mutual kind congratulations, close the scene. Might not this have some dreamy resemblance to the Egyptians mourning for the death of Osiris, and their gladness for his recovery? A grand site of native gathering was near Mount Macedon, where there are many massive basaltic columns, some twenty feet high, the stones of which have a convex base and a concave top. Here, amidst the magnificence of nature, with the moon piercing the shade of a gum forest, and lighting up as a fairy scene the amphitheatre of romantic looking mountains, the tribes would assemble in friendly greetings, and enjoy their soul-stirring corrobories.

We were much struck one evening with an unearthly uproar, arising from a large native camp. Yells were intermingled with the tum tum of rugs and the barking of dogs. Running hastily to the place, we saw the men naked as for a corrobory, sitting at a distance in two large circles, with their eyes to the ground, silent and motionless. Not a sound was to be heard from the women and children; but from one of the wirlies a low moan proceeded. We walked to the spot, and saw a poor creature in dying agonies. Presently every man left the ground. Thinking our presence was not required at such a season, we retired also. In about half-an-hour the party reassembled, and a furious corrobory ensued. Doubtless the death-struggles had closed, and the natives sought to dispel their gloom in the excitement of the dance.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Mr. Gellibrand bore this testimony to the character of the lubras of Port Phillip in 1835: "The women, and especially the young ones, are modest in their behaviour—they all appear to be well disposed." Alas! this conduct suffered a grievous change when the whites came over from Van Diemen's Land soon after. Captain Hunter, sixty years ago, gave a pleasing account of his first interview with the women of New South Wales. It runs thus: "The men desired to have the presents for the women, and they would carry and deliver them; but to this proposal I positively refused to agree, and made them understand that unless they were allowed to come forward, they should not have any. Finding I was determined, an old man who seemed to have the principal authority directed the women to advance, which they did immediately, with great good humour; and during the whole time that we were decorating them with beads, rags of white linen, and some other trifles, they laughed immoderately, though trembling all the while through an idea of danger. Most of those we saw at this time were young women; they were all perfectly naked, as when first born. As soon as the women were ordered to approach us, about twenty men, whom we had not before seen, sallied from the wood, completely armed with lance and shield. They drew themselves up in a line upon the beach, and each man had a green bough in his hand, as a sign of friendship. Their disposition was as regular as any well-disciplined troops could have been, and this party, I apprehend, was solely for the defence of the women, if any insult had been offered them."

The native women in their wild state are seldom much encumbered with clothes. As in New Guinea the young females only have a covering, and that but a very slight one,

Digitized by Google

so the Australian ladies are similarly unadorned. Barrington wrote, in 1803: "The females at an early age wear a little apron made of the skin of the opossum or kangaroo, cut into slips, and hanging a few inches from the waist; this they wear till they grow up, and are taken by men, and then they are left off." Travellers declare that innocence is perfectly compatible with such an apparent breach of decorum. Major Mitchell found the Port Phillip lubras unconscious of any impropriety in their appearance. Some had a kind of basket work to protect their backs from the cold, while they saw no occasion to provide shelter elsewhere. The separation of the sexes is said to have been made by the Thirri, a small lizard: there is great fun in a camp whenever one of these creatures is found. The Levitical law is observed every moon, the female being a week alone in a hut, though near friends. In Western Australia the word employed to express this is wallak ngwandowin (dwelling apart).

The personal aspect of the elderly females is sometimes repulsive, they being far inferior to the old men in physical appearance. Short in stature, extremely attenuated in form, with elongated and flaccid mammæ, stubble like hair, thick lips, and no Egyptian cleanliness, they rather resemble the Hottentot Venus than the ideal De Medici. Mr. Cunningham, the botanist, met with such specimens in the bush as inclined him to exclaim, "Really some of the old women only seem to require the tail to complete their identity with the monkey tribe." Yet Mr. Moore, Advocate-General of Western Australia, can say, "In early life their form is symmetrical, their movements graceful, their voices musical, and the countenances of many lively and rather pleasing." One cause of this inferiority to the males may be their very early marriages, their hard usage, and as hard a fare. We have been favoured, however, with glances at decided exceptions to this dark picture. Some fifteen years ago the Murray tribe visited their Adelaide friends. Among the river aborigines was seen a young female about sixteen years of age, who was possessed of such charms as to elicit universal admiration. Her form was as delicately and beautifully rounded as that of a Circassian dame. Her breasts were spherical, her hair was parted in glossy ringlets, her mouth exhibited a noble show of ivory, her head was thoroughly Caucasian in shape, and her eyes—brilliant, restless orbs, with thin, long, black, voluptuous lashes—completed her fascinating appearance. Her opossum-rug was worn with the taste of a drawing-room belle. The occasional coquettish partial fall of her robe to expose her beauty, with the half-bashful, half-delighted gaze at the spectator, when she discovered her wilful and naughty inadvertence, could not but provoke a smile.

The female aborigine seldom bore a large family. Old colonists speak of small tribes of a score of individuals, fourteen or fifteen of whom would be children. But what a frightful change must have come over the dark woman, when we learn that in one year lately only two native children were born in an area of thousands of square miles, in the Portland Bay district? The young mother has not much preparation for her hour of sorrow, no length of sufferings, and no repose after deliverance. A mixture of charcoal ochre and fat is rubbed over the skin of the newborn, as a defence against insects and the heat. The tribe cannot wait for her, and the next day she is on the trail. The placenta is regarded as sacred. No one scarcely thinks of remaining with the poor creature in her trial. A string of opossum fur is fastened round the infant's wrist. The birth of twins has been so rare as hardly to have been noticed by the whites: in fact, such an occurrence takes place elsewhere only once in three thousand times. Though the families are usually so very small, and in the civilised parts few if any children are ever born, yet the fact of a specific appellation for the seventh male and female child would imply that such paucity of increase was not formerly the case. A woman was known to have had nine births. Mr. Protector Moorhouse has remarked in some tribes numerical names for the children of a family—one, two, three, four, &c., the male name differing from the female; thus, warritya, female, and warriarto, male.

So far for desiring children at the present day, they take no pains to conceal their pleasure at being barren, though arising from a guilty cause. It was otherwise formerly, when native customs were unbroken by the advent of Europeans, and native virtues unsupplanted by civilised vices. Families were then an institution of the bush. We have an incidental allusion to this fact by one writing towards the close of the last century. "In fishing," he says, "we frequently saw a woman with two or three children in a miserable boat, the highest part of which was not six inches above the surface of the water, washing almost in the edge of a surf, which would frighten an old seaman to come near in a good manageable vessel. The youngest child, if very small, lies across the mother's lap, from whence, although she is fully employed in fishing, it cannot fall; for the boat, being very shallow, she sits in the bottom with her knees up to her breast, and between her knees and body, the child lies perfectly secure." Early

Digitized by Google

voyagers and travellers frequently refer to the number of children in the tribes.

The half-castes are few; even in 1846 Mr. Robinson only knew of from twenty to thirty. One of the loveliest children we ever beheld was a half-caste infant on the banks of the Murray. With a rich bronze colour, soft curly hair, and chubby, ruddy cheeks, he had the sparkling eyes of his really pretty mother. One roguish little fellow of some fifteen months would peep over the lubra's shoulder when a white man or woman passed, and holding out its tiny hand, would laughingly whine in English, "gib me copper."

We have known several half-castes in Australia, though only, with but two exceptions, in the condition of very young children; for, as declared in the report of the Victoria Church of England Assembly of 1856, "the half-caste male children are usually destroyed," while the female live little after. We are never likely to have in Australia a mixed race of Europeans and blacks, forming a distinct people, as the Griquas of South Africa. A few, a very few, half-caste Tasmanian females have lived to maturity, under the protection of the whites; but such cases have been even rarer among the more numerous tribes of the New Holland shores.

It is a singular fact that, in the extreme paucity of births among the Australians, almost the whole of those taking place are half-castes. Proud of such occasions, the natives always direct the attention of passing strangers to the pretty little one. Once stopping to admire a very lovely half-caste infant on the banks of the Wannon, playing in the arms of its clean and even beautiful young native mother, a spruce, dandified young fellow, adorned with a magnificent beard, walked up to us, and smilingly asked us, "You like him, picaninny?" Upon our answering, "Yes, very much like him, pretty little picaninny," he extended his hand toward us in a mock suppliant manner, and said, "Very well, you give him sixpence." Another time we noticed a little rogue, red as an Indian, with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, tumbling about the rags of a wirlie. His *soi disant* mother, an ancient-looking dame, replied to my interrogation of "Who him father?" by pointing with a knowing leer to the black chief beside her, a white-haired old man of sixty. As may be supposed, these children are great favourites with the white ladies of the bush. It is sad enough to reflect upon the end as well as the life of such offspring.

Sir Francis Head, when Governor of Canada, wrote thus of the question of half-caste Indians, in a despatch to Lord Glenelg:—"As regards their women, it is difficult to refrain from remarking that civilisation, in spite of the pure, honest, and unremitting zeal of our missionaries, by some accursed process, has blanched their babies' faces."

The young folks of a camp are full of fun. Although the father seldom condescends to a romp, the maternal feelings are in all their natural play. We have repeatedly spent an hour in watching their happy gambols. Once asking a native to send her child to the Black School, she answered sorrowfully, "No, no, no, me plenty cry." Though the lubra may now and then get a tap with a waddy for want of assiduity in procuring her coolie a good dinner, or for being too chattingly familiar with a young man, it is very rare that a child is struck; the demonstration of temper is admired in the boy, as an evidence of future warlike spirit. Kind, however, as the mother is to her offspring, she has another favourite, on whom she lavishes her caresses. No lubra is seen without a pack of hungry, spotted, dirty, mangey dogs, whose pups share with her own child her lactary blessing. A friend told us he once saw, outside of Melbourne, a native woman suckling in their turns a little boy and four puppies. The Australian mothers suckle their children for two, three, and occasionally four years. This is chiefly because the nature of native food compels the little one to depend upon the breast. Another motive is undoubtedly to avoid trouble in frequent conception; this does not always succeed, for two children of different ages have been seen dependent on lactation at the same time, the supply of nourishment never ceasing through the crisis. Mr. Ellis observed this also in Polynesia. This extended period of nursing, from two to five years, is not uncommon among the black tribes of India, American Indians, Cingalese, Laplanders, Persians, and Tartars; it was so with Jews formerly. Even the Koran sanctions two years for lactation. This system certainly, to some extent, limits the fecundity of women. They are full of fun in the family. A girl once making fun of her mother before us, pointed her out, and laughingly exclaimed, "She my bad old woman—plenty ugly—plenty growl." The woman rose, ran at her, rolled her over on the grass, and pretended to beat her, while joining heartily in the laugh of her merry daughter.

MARRIAGES.

The old story is, that when a young man wanted a wife, he lay in wait for a girl, sprang upon her like a tiger, felled her senseless with his club, and dragged her off bleeding to his lair. We need hardly say

Digitized by Google

that this is a gross calumny upon the native character. The process of courtship among them is about what it is with us. What is called the throwing of sheep's eyes is the usual preliminary of attack, followed by importunity, coyness, ardent avowals, and bashful pleasure. There is one lamentable deficiency in their love makings, which will dispose every sentimental youth and lassie to consign them irretrievably to the doom of baboons; we allude to their incomprehensible non-appreciation of the mysteries of a kiss! The New Zealander and his neighbours have an agreeable substitute for labial embraces —they rub noses; the strength of a lover's attachment was estimated by the force of a cartilaginous pressure. But our benighted aborigines have not even this nasal consolation.

On the Swan River, the word for marriage is Balyata, which signifies fixed, as stumps of trees, or the embedded rock. All the dialects seem to possess derivatives from the word *heart*, and express the tender passion. We received from a respected widower, who had passed the fearful ordeal, a faithful and vivid description of a native courtship, which we immediately transferred to paper in language as similar to his own as we could recollect. First telling us that if not previously engaged to a young unweaned lady, according to the fashion, the young man sought a partner from a neighbouring tribe. He would join them at a visit, and sit down at the family fire; selecting that particular hearth graced by the presence of some youthful beauty. Thus the courtship begins, according to our authority:—"Young man sit down, very fine young man, see one woman, very fine young woman. She look at him, say, 'very fine young man.' He look at her, say, 'very fine young woman.' He talk to her; she talk to him; then plenty one talk, one day, many day. Then he say, 'I like you my wife.' She say, 'I like you my husband.' Then he say, 'you go when me ready?' She say, 'me go when you ready.' By-and-bye she say, 'when you ready?' Then she talk one woman, all the same friend. She say, 'very nice young man, you go along him his country?' One day, young man walk about. Two women walk about, plenty long way. Then fine young woman she take hand fine young man, run away plenty fast his own country. By-and-bye, big one angry that young woman father. Tribe come young man tribe. Plenty spear and boomerang. So blackfellow get wife."

No mystic Hymen knot is tied;
No orange bloom in hair;
No ring of faith, no bridal robe
Bedeck the maiden fair.

Her 'possum rug her only wealth,
Her wishes little more;
Her nuptial couch the "gunyah" shade—
Her thoughts no higher soar.

Yet e'en that leafy bower is blest
If Love make there his stay;
And not unknown with dark tribes is
A happy wedding-day.

The system of early betrothment prevails, as in most countries of the world, and as it prevailed among the civilised nations of Christian Europe not a long time ago. As polygamy is sanctioned among these tribes, as among almost all nomadic people, from the Bedouins of Genesis to the present roving Tartars, the grown folks get more of such promised favours than the juveniles. Hence it is that old men may often be seen with youthful wives, while strapping young fellows are portionless. When we sympathised with the latter upon their forlorn condition, the usual response was, "Never mind, plenty lubra one day." The young fellows often joke around the fire at their unhappy lot in having no lubra yet, and talk of getting one in various ways, fair or foul, with great glee. We have heard them often say, "Plenty pretty girls sit down there—me go and see by-and-bye. What for old man keep him all lubras?" A hearty laugh will follow this sally of wit.

Some of these Turks, as Kangaroo Jack of Gipps' Land, managed to have four or five ladies, who contrived to plague the old fellows most wofully. In sheer desperation, they have been known to make a present to a friend of some shrivelled, ancient partner, who would afterwards complain of the advent of another into the establishment. The man with two wives, if they will only tolerably agree, lives an easy life, as he has a couple of providers. The condition of a junior wife is often one of great hardship, from the jealousy and cruelty of her senior.

Such sorrows are alluded to by the learned Hindoo Banerjen in these words: "Nothing is more dreaded or calculated to poison a maiden's happiness for life than her husband's polygamy; and supplications are made to the Deity, by means of certain most degrading and superstitious rites, that it may not be her lot to be yoked with a husband of more than one wife."

Sir James F. Palmer, the Speaker of the Council of Victoria, once related to us an illustration of the misery of polygamy. A young woman, who had been servant in his family for several years, and had proved industrious, affectionate, and thoroughly well-conducted, receiving not only the advantages of secular instruction but those of religious training, was afterwards obliged to marry an

Digitized by Google

old man to whom she had been betrothed, and who had already another wife. No longer clad and living as a civilised and a Christian woman, she was then a wanderer with her besotted husband, amidst the filth, exposure, and depravity of a native camp. But even this system is not worse, perhaps, than that of the South Sea Islands, in which one woman has two or more husbands.

Bishop Short, of Adelaide, speaks of the men "treating their wives as slaves; and, by tyrannical polygamy, appropriating them to the old men of the tribe, or from time to time relaxing this custom with promiscuous intercourse."

Missionaries have been much tried with the difficulties of polygamy in their work. Women, when married, are under the protection of their husbands,—are provided for, and receive support and protection for their offspring. Great inconvenience, with no small suffering and crime, having arisen from the abandonment of wives by the Christianised men, Bishop Colenso, of Natal, has permitted, under certain circumstances, his Kaffir converts to retain their duplicate of partners. When Dr. Livingstone was entreating the friendly chief, Sechele, to abandon his harem, the African desired some compromise, and exclaimed, "No, no; I want always to have five wives, at least."

Jealousy is always one consequence of polygamy,—not only of wives with each other, but the husband with his wives. He is often plagued with the idea of one or more hatching some mischief against him. Dr. Livingstone thus records an African case:—"When a man suspects that any of his wives have bewitched him, he sends for the witch-doctor, and all the wives go forth into the field, and remain fasting till that person has made an infusion of the plant. They all drink it,—each one holding up her hand in attestation of her innocency. Those who vomit it are considered innocent, while those whom it purges are pronounced guilty, and put to death by burning."

In the event of a girl, unbetrothed, being without a father, her brother took charge of that property, and bestowed it on whom he pleased. Sometimes men would exhibit friendship by a change of sisters. A present expedited the transfer much in the same way as among more civilised nations. Among the Kaffirs the price of a wife is regulated by the price of an ox; and an author remarks: "She, considering herself as an article for sale, is seldom surprised or unhappy on being told she is going to be disposed of." Occasionally heart questions do occur with the female Australians as among their fairer sisters of Europe, and romantic love scenes are not altogether unknown in Gum forests and on Honeysuckle Plains. The following tale, roughly put in verse, will serve as an illustration. The incidents are strictly true. The occurrence took place about 1843, and the final conflict was witnessed by a friend of the writer's:—

Laloa dwelt beside the stream
That named the Goulburn tribe:
The forest belle of those who longed
To have her for their bride.

A stranger from the Yarra side,
Young Kooin, courting came;
And soon soft looks and smiles from each,
Disclosed the mutual flame.

E'er, in the chase, the mimic fight,
Or the corrobory,
In swiftness, skill, and arms,—o'er all
He won the victory.

And as, in ochred beauty dressed,
He sat beside the fair,
With sparkling eyes and honeyed words,
She owned a conquest there.

He bound the white clematis wreath
Around her sable brow,
And from her rosy lips received
Love's tender, lasting vow.

Alas! the course did never yet
Run smooth to lovers true;
Such sorrows come to all alike,
Whate'er their clime or hue.

For native customs had set forth
That Marmon should possess
This Goulburn beauty for his wife,—
To charm the wilderness.

Laloa wept, and told her love
Beside her father's knee;
But nought could move his stern resolve,
Nor change the tribe's decree.

To dreary gunyah of her lord,
A helpless captive led,—
By many blows compelled to yield,
By waddy forced to wed;

But faithful to her Yarra lad,
And weary of her chain,—
One night she glided from her home,
Her lad to find again.

She scaled the dizzy mountain height,
And trod the fern-tree vale,—
Nor halted until Kooin's ears
Had heard her love-sick tale.

But, ah! her chasing kinsmen soon
Appear in vengeance there;
And they her fainting body from
Her wounded lover tear.

His tribe resent the cruel deed,
And bloody battle wage;
While kindred tribes on either side
In strife haste to engage.

Laloa's head bore many blows,
From Marmon and from sire,—
Yet would she no opossum get,
Nor light the evening fire;

Digitized by Google

But sadly sit, and fondly look
Across to Kooin's home,—
And vainly seek a chance to fly—
Again with him to roam.

An aged chief at last was moved:
He wished the fray to cease;
And so proposed a duel should
Unite the tribes in peace.

The day arrives: and warriors
From alps and creeks repair,
The single combat to behold,—
Their feud to settle there.

So Marmon, full of rage and hate,
Young Kooin came to fight;
For all declared the victor there
Should claim the bride that night.

And well they fought; but love prevailed,
For Kooin won the day;
'Midst shouts of joy, he seized his prize,
And bore his bride away.

The favourite mode was that of courtship in another tribe. This subjected the parties to a little harmless fighting, and a good corrobory made all friends again. Sometimes they adopted the old English system of trial by wager of battle. The aggrieved parties demanded justice of the eloper's tribe. The young man stood forth naked at a fixed distance, armed defensively with a shield. The friend of the stolen lady then threw a certain number of spears, one after the other; these were to be parried off through the activity of the Gretna Greener. Sometimes a flesh wound would be received, but this was a rare case. If not satisfied, or, if such were the agreement, the same number of boomerangs were next hurled. Having made the requisite atonement, justice was declared satisfied; and the hero walked up to his lady-love, received her formally from her tribe, and, amidst universal congratulations, bore off his prize.

A capital story is told by Barrington, the pickpocket author of the early New South Wales days. A certain blackfellow dwelt in some leafy palace of the bush with his three sisters. Once upon a time, a young fellow belonging to the neighbouring tribe caught sight of one of these fair ladies, and, in true Roman style, picked her up and ran off with her, without first putting the question. The indignant brother rushed after the ravishing lover with spear and waddy. In the way he encountered and recognised the sister of the robber. His first impulse was to try the keenness of his weapon upon this relative of his foe; but she threw herself at his feet, and cast upon his fiery glances so soothing a ray from her lustrous orbs, that his arm and brow relaxed, his eye softened, and in a gentle tone he allayed her fears. A formal treaty of peace must have been entered into, for we are informed that the beauty thus expressed her sentiments:—"You no beat me—me love you—you love me; me love your sisters—your sisters love me; my brother no good." It is pleasing to record that the avenger returned from the pursuit a happier and a married man.

This wife-dragging system seems to prevail among the Greenlanders, according to Hans Egede, the enterprising Moravian missionary to these Esquimaux. His account is very amusing from its very simplicity. He says: "They go to the place where the young woman is, and carry her off by force; for, though she ever so much approve of the match, yet out of modesty she must make as if it went against the grain, and as if she was much ruffled at it,—else she would be blamed and get an ill name, as if she had been a love-sick wench. After she is brought to the house of the bridegroom, she keeps for some time at a distance, and sits retired in some corner upon the bench, with her hair dishevelled, and covering her face, being bashful and ashamed. In the meanwhile the bridegroom uses all the rhetoric he is master of, and spares no caresses to bring her compliance: and the good girl, being at length persuaded and prevailed with, kindly yields to him."

The men have some influence exercised over them in their matrimonial speculations by the voice of the tribe, and often by the parents. For instance, a young man once brought home a girl as his bride. His mother looked at her, disliked her, and told the man that she would not do. The obedient son returned the goods, and proceeded to make another selection. The mother on the other side has great power among an African tribe, and where the lover has to work for the parent of his bride, fetching her wood and water, and bowing before her upon his approach. When Dr. Livingstone was among them, a maid of the chief's, being fairer than the generality, was sought in marriage by five at once. Greatly bewildered, and fearful either of giving offence or of being carried off into the bush by one of them, she cast her cares upon the benevolence of her master. He ordered the suitors to stand in a line before him, and requested the girl to make her choice. "She took care," says the missionary traveller, "to select the finest-looking fellow of the party, and was led home in triumph and safety by the sable favourite." Even this system differs alike from the Australians and the Muraas of the Amazon River. The latter enter into fair lists about the lady; the rivals set to fighting with fists, *a la* Tom Sayers, and the best thrasher gains the fair prize.

Marriages are celebrated at an earlier age

Digitized by Google

with the blacks than among the English, though not, as some have said, when the parties are mere children. Fashions change with times; for very frequently such contracts took place in Europe, as Dr. Roberton of Manchester has shown in his learned treatise upon the subject. While the wardship laws were in force, girls were often given in marriage when but twelve years of age, though the laws of the country do not now permit union under twelve. Catherine Parr was married at twelve, and had a second husband long before twenty. Good old Grafton appealed to Elizabeth, as a queen and a woman, to redress the wrongs of her sex. "It is much to be lamented," says he, "that wards are bought and sold as commonly as are beasts; and marriages are made with them that are many times very ungodly, for divers of them, being of young and tender years, are forced to judge by another man's affections, to see into another man's eyes, and say yea with another man's tongue, and finally consent with another man's heart; for none of these senses be perfected to the parties in that minority."

Among people who view women but as goods and chattles, or with whom the means of living are easily obtained, marriages are usually early. The code of Menu, of India, declares, "A girl may be married at eight, and even earlier;" though it humanely stipulates, "If her father fails to give her a husband for three years after she is *marriageable*, she is at liberty to choose one for herself." This gives the key to the mystery. Marriages were arranged by the parents before the age of puberty, according to law, being regarded as sinful afterwards, though not marriageable in the true sense of the term until the age of fourteen or fifteen, as among ourselves. The observations of Mr. Crawfurd, though relative to the Australian neighbours of the Indian Seas, are applicable to the early unions of all savage races; "their minds, from the moral agency under which they are formed, certainly acquire a kind of premature ripeness earlier than in Europe, but their bodies do not. Puberty comes on at the same age as in Europe; the body continues to grow as long; women bear children to as late a period of life." Mr. Ellis says the same thing of the South Sea Islanders:—"Some years usually elapse in early marriages before child-bearing." Montesquieu was the real author of the absurd theory of early maturity among people in warm latitudes. Among his disciples may be classed the first New Holland historian, Collins, who writes:—"The union of the sexes takes place at an earlier period than is usual in colder climates." It was to check the evil consequences of early marriages, so conspicuous in Ireland and the British manufacturing towns, that some European Governments have fixed the legal time so high in years, or, as in Norway, until the young man has satisfied the authorities that he is able to maintain a family.

As among the ancient Jews, the wife was always transferred to the brother of the deceased husband. A widow was obliged to wait two weeks before another match; a widower was not subjected to such restraint. The widow went to her friends for protection and bestowment. In those cases where no male relative lived to receive her, the widow's fate was a hard one. She was the prey of any ruffian. Mr. Protector Sievwright alludes to such a case as this, when saying, "The cries which the female has uttered at night, by blows received by the unfortunate victim at the hands of the men, have reached the encampment." Among the Esquimaux, the widow supports herself and her children by prostitution. The Hindoo widow cannot marry again: a fruitful source of licentiousness, abortion, and infanticide. When Australian husbands went upon a journey, their wives were given in charge of certain male relatives. Before a regular marriage takes place between a native and his betrothed one, the mother of the girl must on no account look upon the face of her intended son-in-law, else her hair would immediately turn grey. Therefore, great care was exercised by the gentleman to avoid her presence. A cunning fellow took advantage of this idea when tormented by the intimacy of a gigantic warrior with his wife. He promised, before the tribe, to give his infant daughter as wife to the gallant. After this the hero was obliged to absent himself from the fair one, or incur the penalty of capital punishment from his people. While the man could dispense with the services of his helpmate, his other half had not equal privileges. It was not so in Poyn, according to old Marco Polo; for there if a husband was absent from home for twenty days, his wife was allowed to select another protector.

Women had fine times of it among the Gado, the original aborigines of India, a people allied to the Australians in many respects. There a man could not turn off his wife, even on account of adultery, unless he gave her not only her children, but the whole of his own property for their maintenance. On the contrary, the lady could turn off the man at any time she liked, and could take the whole of his possessions, and bestow them upon the lover whom she preferred in his stead. Under those circumstances, divorces by the male party very rarely took place. As may be supposed, among these rude and primitive people the

Digitized by Google

courtship was always a leap-year one, the selection being made by the woman.

The domestic life of the aborigines differs from ours. When retiring for the night the husband rolls himself up in his rug, with his feet to the fire; and on the other side, it may be, the wife, similarly enveloped, composes herself to sleep. On one occasion only did we meet with husband and wife beneath the same coverlid, in European fashion.

The treatment women receive from their lords is often severe. The enlightened British nation, after a civilisation of a thousand years, has at last thoroughly awakened to a sense of the wrongs of beaten wives. As the Australians have not entered upon their career of refinement, public opinion among them has not yet assumed the indignant upon this home question. Among them, as until lately among ourselves, the husband may do what he likes with his own in the way of a little thrashing. Some of the lubras submit quite patiently to the infliction of punishment. A scene is got up about the dinner not being ready, or some other omission of domestic duty. The man rages and the woman cries. Then he seizes his waddy, when she, meekly presenting her head at a judicious angle for the convenience of her tormentor, takes her one, two, or a dozen, and retires yelling to her seat at the fire.

While apologizing for a breach of confidence, the author has just met with so good an illustration of native economy, in a letter written by his sister to an English friend, that he cannot refrain from giving an extract. "About a month ago," writes the fair correspondent, "I had a newly-married couple spending their honeymoon under the gum trees in the paddock. One night the bride came from home with a doleful face to show me a blow she had had from her husband. I pitied the poor young thing, and asked her why he had done it. She looked up with great astonishment, and said, "O missus, he my husband—he knock me down when he like." I suppose, by this time, you have guessed the colour of my friends. They were the chief of the Yarra tribe and his wife Maria, as fine a pair as can be met with, black or white. Maria has as sweet a smile and pair of sparkling eyes as ever bewitched poor mortal man."

An Encounter Bay black had stolen or decoyed away the wife of one of the Murray tribe. The husband, in one of his rambles, found the frail one alone, and at once gave her the orthodox punishment with the waddy. The poor creature got free from him, and ran towards the sea. Caught in the water, she resigned herself to her fate, stood quietly to receive a furious blow on her head, sank into the sea, and expired.

An unhappy girl, who had been waddied and speared for refusing to live with an old man, who had already three wives, vented her complaint to a lady friend of ours in these words,—"No good. Whitefellow one lubra, very good. Blackfellow, plenty—but no good plenty 'pear 'em."

Governor Grey has very prettily hit off a piece of family history, in the shape of a squabble between an ancient lubra and her lord, about the latter introducing another spouse into the household :—

Wherefore came ye, Weerang,
In my beauty's pride,
Stealing cautiously,
Like the tawny boreang (wild dog),
On an unwilling bride.
'Twas thus you stole me
From one that loved me tenderly!
A better man he was than thee,
Who having forced me thus to wed,
Now so oft deserts my bed.
Yang, yang, yang, yoh!

O where is he that won
My youthful heart,
Who oft used to bless
And call me loved one;
You Weerang tore apart
From his fond caress
Her whom you now desert and shun;
Out upon thee, faithless one;
O may the Boyl-yas bite and tear
Her, whom you take your bed to share.
Yang, yang, yang, yoh!

Wherefore does she slumber
Upon thy breast
Once again to-night,
Whilst I must number
Hours of sad unrest and broken plight?
Is it for this that I rebuke
Young men, who dare at me to look?
While she, replete with arts and wiles
Dishonours you, and still beguiles.

THE HUSBAND RETORTS.

Oh! you lying artful one!
Wag away your dirty tongue;
I have watched your tell-tale eyes
Beaming love without disguise;
I've seen young Imbat nod and wink
Oftener perhaps than you may think.

Blows with a waddy, followed by a shrill cry, close this dialogue.

INFANTICIDE AND CANNIBALISM.

The destruction of children arises not from a want of maternal affection, but, from the will of the tribe, flight from an enemy, the difficulty of following roving husbands with infants, and the want of natural food for such offspring. The last reason is a strong one. The character of native food is unsuitable to very young children. These depend

Digitized by Google

upon their mother for a period of twice or thrice the time of Europeans. Mr. Wedge wrote of our blacks in 1835 :— "They have another custom, namely, that of destroying their new born children, if born before the former child has reached the age of three or four years, until which time they are not weaned."

It appears to have been also the custom, when a woman was promised to one man but given to another, to kill the first child. If two were born at a birth, one was usually strangled. Humboldt mentions the same thing of the Guiana Indians; though that was because it was so much like rats to have two at a time. Mr. Assistant Protector Parker adds another reason for the practice, reflecting on the women : "because they feared to get prematurely old, and unacceptable to their husbands." The fearful crime of producing abortion was not uncommon, especially after a quarrel between man and wife. Dr. Ross has this statement in his *Almanac* for 1836 :—"One female, the wife of Nullaboid was pointed out to Mr. Wedge, as having destroyed ten out of eleven of her children." Mr. Protector Thomas talks despairingly of the practice, alleging that the natives have lost heart and wish to have no children live after them, because they have no country now. The half-castes have almost always been killed. A woman, when appealed to about it, simply answered—"No good—all the same warrigal"; or, like wild dog. Mr. Briarty, of the Upper Yarra, once saved a half-caste from destruction by his entreaties. A lubra, speaking to us upon the subject, frankly exclaimed: "Blackfellow kill 'em plenty white picaninny." They have been known to acknowledge the murder of infants on the plea—"What for picaninny?—whitefellow shoot 'em when 'em young man."

The following passage from Captain Grant, the discoverer of the shores of Port Phillip, in 1801, exhibits them in their early state : "One of the women," says he, "applied to a female convict to lend her a spade that she might bury her child alive, as she said it cried very much, and was not worth rearing up. Upon being refused, she ran away and left her child with the woman, which pined and died for want of the nourishment of the breast. There is reason to think that the New Holland women have a secret method of destroying the *fœtus in utero*,—a horrid practice, and which is often of fatal consequences to themselves."

Cannibalism is a revolting practice, but belonging to all ages, and almost all countries. We need not be too hard upon the Port Phillip black, when we remember that our own forefathers, the Saxons as well as the Britons, were equally guilty of this crime. Many nations of antiquity devoured the dead of their enemies. The human sacrifices of Mexico were eaten. Not only the New Zealanders, but all the South Sea Islanders, were fond of such flesh; also many tribes of Africa, South America, Borneo, and New Guinea. The like foul habit existed in Japan, Tartary, and South Eastern China. Old Sir John Mandeville talks of certain Monguls relishing men's ears "soused in vynegre." Marco Polo gives a narrative of coming to one place where they suffocated the dying and ate their friends. "When dressed," says that traveller, "the relatives assemble, and in a convivial manner eat the whole of it, not leaving so much as the marrow in the bones." Grievous trouble would come to the deceased if not thus absolutely devoured. There is an allusion to cannibalism in Lev. xxvi. 29.

Among the Battas of Sumatra, allied to the Australians, an old man will mount a tree, which his friends shake, and say, "The season is come, the fruit is ripe, and it must descend," when down tumbles the poor fellow, a meal for the cannibal party. Gibbon, the historian, tells us of the Attacotti, a people living on the site of modern Glasgow, who indulged in similar tastes. The Ottawas used to make soup of captured Iroquois. One of the early American governors speaks of a standing committee of seven Miamis Indians, to devour by authority. An Englishman was eaten in Kentucky so late as 1760. A cannibal feast was held at Tauranga, in New Zealand in 1842. In a New Zealand song occurs the following passage: "Leave as food for me the flesh of my enemy, Titoko. I will shake with greedy teeth the bodies of Huhi Kahu and of Ueheka. My throat gapes eagerly for the brains not yet taken from the skull of Potukeko. In my great hatred I will swallow now the stinking brains of Tarati Kitiki."

Our blackfellows have long been accused of this crime. Mr. Wedge, in his visit before the whites settled here, wrote as follows:—"The natives are cannibals, but they do not indulge in this horrible propensity except in times of war, when the bodies of those who are killed are roasted and eaten. They make no secret of this barbarous custom, but speak of it as a matter of course, and coolly describe their manner of preparing the repast, the process of which is too revolting to commit to paper."

Mr. Assistant-Protector Sievwright describes a woman being cut open, the blood drank, part of the flesh eaten raw, and the other roasted. Dr. Simpson, of Moreton Bay, declares that dying children were devoured by their parents. Some persons found

Digitized by Google

part of a woman's breast in the bag of a lubra, who confessed that the other portions were eaten. Dr. Thomson sent the head of a baked child to the Edinburgh Museum. The Murray natives never ate the head, but threw that into the river. An old colonist informed us that a lady friend of his was a great favourite with the Yarra blacks, from a belief that she was the risen appearance of one of their own people; consequently she had secrets told her that were withheld from others. One day a lubra came to her with something under her blanket; she then produced a piece of a cooked child, requesting the lady not to tell. Mr. Sutherland was our informant about a cannibal scene, when a party was after poor Mr. Gellibrand in 1837. The Barrabool tribe had captured an old man and a young girl belonging to the Lake Colac tribe, whom they had unjustly charged with the murder of their friend Gelliband. The child was killed and roasted, and the fat employed for macassar oil. Some of the warm flesh was laughingly offered to the Englishmen; Dr. Cotter, we believe, brought away part of the thigh as an evidence of the fact. Half-a-dozen children, left as a pledge of friendship with the wild Gipps Land tribe, were killed and devoured by their careful guardians. In Mr. Fawkner's *Geelong Advertiser* of April, 1841, is a notice of some such feast, when two lubras affectionately tendered a choice smoking morsel to the Protector. Captain Grant declares his conviction of such practices, chiefly upon the evidence of a native who could speak a little English at Sydney. "She showed me," says he, "in what manner they despatch their victims, which is done by striking them in the pole of the neck with a waddy or club, after which, with the wommara, an instrument they throw the spears with, they make an incision from the throat down the breast to the lower part of the belly, and another across the chest. This she showed me by making me stretch myself on the deck."

WEAPONS.

The weapons of the Australians are of a very rude character. The native axe is of stone, usually basalt or clinkstone, of a jet black colour, and exceedingly hard and heavy. By dint of much trouble a rough edge is brought to it. It is then fixed into the cleft of a stick with gum and native cord. The gum of the Xanthorrhea, or grass tree, is preferred from its pitchy quality, and because it is not softened by the sun. The axe is similar to those found in British tombs. The *Nulla Nulla* or Waddy, is a weighty wooden weapon, two feet long, with one end heavier than the other. The *Elleman*, *Hieleman*, or *Helimar* is a sort of shield, two or three feet in length, of a long, oval, or angular shape, of bark or thin wood, and sometimes the shell of protuberances upon trees, with which they catch the spears of their foes. The handle is through the middle of the under portion. Another kind of shield, of heavy wood, narrow but strong, has a knob to be used offensively.

The spear is of various kinds. Light ones are used for hunting or fishing. The wood is always selected from the hardest and toughest forest trees and shrubs. To straighten the sticks they are held over a fire, or bent beneath the force of strong teeth. The jagged spear is furnished with pieces of angular quartz, fastened on with gum; in these more civilised times, the glass of broken bottles is employed. The spears are pointed in the fire. They are not to be despised, when able to wound at a distance of one hundred yards. The *Wommera*, *Midla*, or *Throwing Stick* is an ingenious contrivance for accelerating and directing the motion of the spear. It is applied as a lever, and in the socket of it the spear rests when poised. The point of the catch that fits the spear is called in South Australia the *Baku*. When made to fit into the end of the spear, the hole is known as the *Yudnu*. The wommera is commonly made of cherry-tree or wattle-wood, about two feet long or less. Barrington noticed that used by the Port Jackson blacks sixty years ago to be a stick with a shell at one end, and a hook at the other. It was not seen at Moreton Bay in 1820, but has been noticed at Endeavour River on the east, Hanover Bay on the north-west, and King George's Sound on the south-west. The New Caledonians have a similar contrivance. They have a cord attached to the forefinger, and twisted round the end of the spear, but so as to quit hold when the weapon is hurled.

The Boomerang is a curved thin stick, turning at rather a sharp angle, being about two feet long and two inches broad, which is thrown at the enemy in such a way as to return to the hand of the owner, after performing a singular rotatory motion in an upward and downward curve line. It is too ingenious and philosophically constructed an instrument to be the invention of the Australians. The representation of a similar weapon on the walls of ancient Egypt indicates its high antiquity. Thrown at a sheep at a distance of eighty yards, it has killed the animal, and yet returned to the hand of the man. The natives of the Lower Murray and Lake Victoria tribes are said not to have used it until recent times, when it was in-

Digitized by Google

NATIVE FIGHT.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

troduced by their neighbours on the Glenelg. It is in use all along the east coast, and has been seen on the north. The Lliangle is a formidable weapon as we have seen it exercised. It is a heavy stick, with a knob at the handle end, and a halbert-shaped elbow at the top, coming to an axe edge. Frightful wounds are produced by the blows, unless warded off by a strong shield and an active arm.

The Australian tribes were often involved in petty conflicts, arising from trespass upon their hunting grounds, the abduction of their women, revenge for injury to individual members of the tribe, and the usual jealousies of neighbouring states. We never heard of schemes of territorial conquests, or of wars to satisfy the ambition of a dark Alexander or Napoleon. Due notice was usually given of the approach of hostilities by missives, in the shape of certain sticks, by sacred messengers. No unfair advantage is taken, and no instance is known of guns being employed by those acquainted with their use, it being regarded as a cowardly and unworthy act. They like to work themselves up to the fighting condition, by beating of weapons, violent gesticulating and jumping, the biting of beards, shrieking and roaring, with the free use of tongue in abuse. When advancing to the attack, a good yabber is the first charge, in which the women take no mean part. Often the men would burst into loud laughter, when an Amazonian heroine of their party brought out some bright sally of wit at the expense of the other side. Sometimes the tragedy of the Horatii and the Curatii would be enacted, or a single champion step forward to defy the strongest of his opponents. A spear or boomerang thrown would be the signal for universal action, although pauses for yabberings would occasionally take place. But as the author had the fortune, good or bad, to witness a native fight, the narrative is here given, as detailed in his work on "Western Victoria."

"Some half-dozen blacks were encamped opposite the Wickliffe Hotel. I noticed them through the forenoon as being particularly noisy. At length three men walked off in fighting costume, armed with several boomerangs, the lliangle, and the narrow shield. They were much excited, and one nearly naked fellow cut some wonderful pantomimic capers, brandishing his weapons, leaping in the air, vibrating his legs and arms in a rapid manner, and vociferating furiously: Following some neighbours, I walked on to the Hopkins bridge. There I saw another party of Blacks engaged in a violent dispute with the three new comers. All carried their weapons, and from time to time, in the heat of argument, jumped aside to flourish their lliangles. The lubras were not idle spectators. Each one bore in hand a long, heavy pole with a sharpened point.

"There being no prospect of an amicable settlement of differences, war was declared. The conflict was less of a melée than of single combats. At first, one who wore a cap seemed to attempt the pacificator; but with the clash of arms his warlike blood was stirred, and he leaped, and shrieked, and struck as madly as the rest. Seizing an armful of boomerangs, a swift succession of them would be hurled against the antagonist, who by crouching, dodging, or shield movement sought to evade the wooden shower. When his artillery was exhausted, the warrior rushed upon the foe with his lliangle. The other was ready, and they met on equal terms, each striving with powerful arm to deal a crushing blow, and with the eye of an eagle to ward off attack. The amazing springs they made, with the violent and extraordinary contortions of their limbs, gave the combat anything but the appearance of a human one.

"In the meanwhile the lubras were going about the field with their poles, cracking the heads of those opposed to their side, or who were thought to be taking an unfair advantage. It was difficult at our safe boomerang distance always to distinguish the part of these Amazons. Now and then a fearful yell from some of them would betoken hearty sympathy in an effective blow, or deep concern in the fate of the wounded. All of a sudden one would thrust her stick in the ground, and, amidst unearthly shrieks, would go through a series of the most wonderful vibrating movements of the frame, as if wholly controlled by the maddest of furies. Then, catching up the pole, she would spring off, and lay about her ten-foot staff as though it were a switch in her hands. Again, a number would rush together, and send forth a very chorus of uproar. Occasionally a wild exulting laughter reached our ears, as if from impish revels. Two of these women rushed down to a fine active fellow who was then engaged in a sharp struggle. It was almost interesting to see the way in which he parried the pole-thrusts by the slightest apparent turn of his liangle or shield, never for a moment seeming to turn his eyes from the darkie before him.

"It was not long before one of the wounded came walking towards us on the bridge, followed by his weeping lubra. He was a noble-looking man, and evinced no concern at the wound save that of pointing it out to us. We saw the cheek-bone laid bare, but the rest of the cut was concealed in the whisker. Willing to gratify curiosity, he coolly took his finger and thumb and opened out the gash, displaying the interior of his

Digitized by Google

mouth. His wife at this sight wrung her hands in bitter anguish, and trembled with excited terror. We urged him to wash the wound and go away: there was no surgeon within twenty miles. But, telling us that 'that one blackfellow do it,' he turned back again to the battle-field. We could stay no longer, it was useless to advise, we could employ no force, and we might have gone twenty-six miles for a constable. Subsequently we heard that the man caught up a liangle, after vainly throwing several boomerangs, and brought down his antagonist, as he would fell a bullock.

"In the midst of this savage scene there was a poor little aboriginal girl drawn up close to the side of the bridge, peeping anxiously and sadly round the corner at the combatants. Who can tell what depth of emotion was stirred in that stealthy glance? No one spoke to her, no one noticed her. As the strife increased she seemed to creep closer than ever to the bridge side. While with no easy pulsation we beheld the bloody conflict, impotent to mollify or prevent, it was with even more saddened feelings that we saw the poor little black outcast beside us. We thought of her present sorrows, of her mode of life, of her future, and we saw the history of the fate of the roaming tribes. We could not repress the conviction that it would be well if the dreamy branches of the sheoak waved over her early grave. When at last we spoke to her, her coy but brilliant eyes met ours, we are not ashamed to confess, moistened with emotion; and after a look of timid surprise she turned again her head to the wall, motionless and dejected."

In their warfare, no prisoners are taken—no trophies retained. The property of the enemy is never destroyed; nor are the women and children the subjects of brutality, as among some civilised nations. Immediately upon the cessation of a fight the parties are friends, and mingle in cordial good feeling. The termination of a battle is the commencement of a corrobory. "It is affecting," says the Guardian of the aborigines, "to see parties who, an hour before, were enemies, sucking each other's wounds." This is a triumphant refutation of the charge of blood thirstiness.

In their wars there is very seldom one killed. A continued feud existed between the Gipps Land and Western Port tribes. The latter, with their Yarra friends, once made an assault upon the night camp of the Gipps Land blacks, being led on by a half civilised savage, Billy Lonsdale, so called after the colonial secretary of the colony, when, *it is said*, in the surprise, one hundred were slaughtered.

We were not a little amused one moonlight night, when roaming about a native encampment, chatting here and there with wakeful parties by their household fires, to fall in with a warrior, or rather, one who aspired to future glory in the field. He was tucked in for the night beneath an ample opossum rug, with feet towards the embers, and face illumined by the rays of a full moon. He was one whom we had previously known, a handsome young man, with good temper to boot, or we might not have ventured to intrude into the privacy of his bedchamber; especially, as beside him, beneath the same coverlet, quite in European style, reclined his fair lady, owning two sparkling eyes, and answering to sixteen or seventeen years of age. Our friend, among other topics of talk, referred to the Darling blacks, against whom he appeared to have a strong antipathy as a Murray native. After sundry warm expressions of hate and defiance, he thrust his naked arm out from the rug, and exclaimed, "Darling blackfellow no good—him plenty talk—him no use eyes—me reed him (spear) in belly." This impassioned eloquence was too much for his companion, whom we could detect giving her mate a loving squeeze beneath the opossum skin, at the same time smilingly saying, "Very good, very good."

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION.

Religious ideas are a gauge of development. Centralisation of a race begets a regular system of worship, definite creeds, and established sacerdotal arrangements. A people dependent upon priestly administrations for the services of religion, may soon degenerate in pious fervour when deprived of that agency. The ancestors of our Australian tribes may have mingled in gorgeous celebrations of worship, and bowed to multiplied and complicated mysteries. But when isolated by any cause from communion with others, or, expatriated, wandering in mere families over distant and strange countries, early associations would gradually lose their force, and traditions be less regarded. Thus the hunting tribes of New Holland became worshipless.

Attempts have been made to show that they had a conception of Deity and of another state. But it is passing strange that the vagaries of one people were wholly unknown to their neighbours, and that interesting legends narrated by some should be perfectly new to others of their own tribe. We strongly suspect that many of these traditions are but concocted tales to excite the wonder of a white visitor. We have taken some pains during the last twenty

Digitized by Google

years to ascertain from missionaries, settlers, and natives whether they were acquainted with the Supreme Being before the white men came. The result of our inquiries is a reply in the negative. They were a godless, prayerless race. The New Zealanders and South Sea Islanders, on the contrary, were not so. Before they launched their canoes for fishing, they addressed their Deities for protection and success. This development of the reverential was an auxiliary to missionary enterprise. Far different was it with Fuegians and Australians, whose sentiment of veneration was certainly objectless, and who, therefore, cannot be charged with the sin of idolatry. Their non-appreciation of religion is sometimes exhibited in a painfully ludicrous light. A boy, who had been taught the Lord's Prayer, one day remarked to his teacher a practical difficulty in his scholastic career. He said, that when out in a desert where food was scarce, he had often repeated "Give us this day our daily bread," and yet no 'possum came; observing, as he walked away, "Plenty gammon, all that yabber." One who had quietly endured a long discourse at a mission station in the hope of a good *tuck out*, was very much disgusted at the small donation he received, and thus vented his spleen: "No good that: plenty one big yabber, picaninny plour" (flour). It was no adequate return for the patience and forbearance he had manifested.

Those who were best acquainted with the Port Phillip blacks, as the Protectors, agreed in regarding them as destitute of any definite notion as to the existence of a Supreme Being. Mr. Assistant-Protector Dredge writes:—"It has generally been found that where any ideas of a Supreme Intelligence remained among a people, there have usually existed some outward indications thereof, as manifested in sacred relics, idols, rites, and ceremonies, constituting their religion. The entire absence of anything of this sort amongst the savages seems, therefore, corroborative of their utter loss of the knowledge of God." There is, however, sufficient ground for believing in some customs exhibiting the remnant of an ancient faith; as Mr. Protector Parker wrote in 1844, "Further communication has induced a conviction that a traditional mythology exists among them, rude and obscure, indeed, but in all probability the indistinct relics of some older and more complete system." Captain Hunter wrote, sixty years ago: "The natives sing a hymn or song of praise from daybreak till sunrise."

In directing attention to some of these traditions, we must again warn the reader against placing too much reliance upon the same. In fact, the very contrariety of opinion among them is rather an argument against the character of the tales they tell. It is with great difficulty that the old men can be brought to say anything upon their mysteries to the infidel whites. The reader will detect in the following account some vague apprehension of an immortality. Mr. Thomas, the present devoted Guardian of the Aborigines, ventures to assert, "They have an idea of a future state, think they will be happy, and that there is a world above, with all the requisites for subsistence without trouble or chasing. They have a notion of transmigration. Some stars, they say, were once blackfellows on this earth."

A singular story, however, appeared in Mr. Westgarth's excellent report of Port Phillip in 1846, which we notice as a curiosity. A friend of this gentleman's, living in the bush, extracted, as he thought, some startling theological theories from the blacks. These proved rather too much, and so proved nothing. He appears, however, to have believed that they received the following notions:—They recognised a Trinity. The Father, the Creator, reposed on a crystalline throne, in a realm to the north-east. His Son, proceeding, not begotten, or, rather, rising from a red liquid flowing through the sky, was pre-eminently the friend of men, became their mediator in the time of trouble, and conducted their shades, after death, to judgment. The third being was a compound of divinity and humanity, the mystical first man, immortal and omniscient, and the especial enemy of the wicked, whose evil doings he reported to the Son. Heaven was described as a happy region, the distant murmurs of whose joys may be distinguished by the sensitive human ear, as the approaching traveller recognises the hum of Melbourne or Sydney. The abode of darkness sent forth echoes of yells and groans from the midst of fire and demons. Women were not to be admitted to the same quarters as the men, because God had neither wife nor mother. Our informant did not learn whether Houris were to be the substitutes for the root-digging lubras, nor what company would be provided as a solace for the exiled wives.

Mr. Westgarth quietly remarks upon the statement of this singularly credulous or self-deluded settler:—"Such is the substance of the notes gathered on this subject by a highly respectable witness; but the degree of credit to be attached to these details must depend, in a great measure, on several circumstances which do not appear in the account—namely, the knowledge which the natives who were questioned may have picked up concerning other religious systems than their own, the degree in which the language

Digitized by Google

used on the occasion of inquiry was mutually understood, and the words and manner in which the questions were put to the aborigines."

At Cape Schanck, of Western Port, a cave is pointed out from which Pundyil or Bin-Beal used to take his walks beside the sea. He was accustomed when upon earth to frequent other caves, chasms, or dark places. Deep basaltic glens were favourite homes. We are well acquainted with one of these assumed divine residences situated in a romantic volcanic rent some fifteen miles from Ballaarat, through which the river passes after rolling down the Lal Lal falls. The planet Jupiter shines by the light of his camp fire in the heavens, whither he has now retired. The Wellington tribes spoke of one Baia-mai, who lived in an island to the east, and in honour of whom there was an annual corrobory, taught them by some strange natives. A brother of this spirit, Dararwirgal, dwells in the far west. He once sent the small-pox among them because he wanted a tomahawk. That useful weapon having been in some way conveyed to him, the disease stayed. Mr. Eyre tells us that the Lower Murray blacks believe in a certain old man in the sky named Nooreele, who had several children without a mother.

From the use of the word Baal, as in Lake Baal Baal, the hill Bool-ga, the Boyl-yas or doctors, Bin-Beal of the Loddon, &c., some have argued a reference to the ancient Phœnician worship. This Bin-Beal a long time ago got hold of a kangaroo, how manufactured we know not, and cutting it into a great many small pieces filled the land with kangaroos. According to Mr. Parker, Bin-Beal, at the request of his daughter, Karakarock, told the sun Gerer to warm, and immediately the earth opened like a door. At this burst of light "plenty blackfellow jump up, sing all the same whitefellow." The said young lady was once walking upon this cold earth with a stick in her hand, killing snakes; giving a sharper blow than usual the stick broke and flame issued, which was the origin of fire.

Among all tribes there is a great apprehension of a being answering to the "Debbledebble," though going under various appellatives. On the coast of New South Wales, "Koen" is the ghost of a blackfellow, painted all over with pipeclay, having an immense abdomen, and going about with a firestick in his hand. His cannibal propensities are much dreaded in the camp. The Adelaide Koen, or Devil, is called "Kuin-yo." The word Koen has been identified with the Egyptian Khron and the Hebrew Cohen. At Port Jackson, formerly, they feared to touch a dead body, because of "Mawn," who held such to be his own property.

A bushman, who was much troubled with blacks in his hut, and who were too well armed for him to attempt force, played upon their superstitious fears to some purpose. He stooped down to a hole in the wall now and then, and appeared to be looking for something. "What for you do like o' that?" said they. "O, nothing," replied the shepherd, "only, Debble-debble come through there by-and-bye, and plenty frighten blackfellow!" The hut was cleared immediately. A similar tale is told of another settler. He knew the blacks were in great consternation whenever they heard what they called the "Whisper of Potoyan," a spirit of the darkness. Being one evening troubled with some of them, whom he could not induce to withdraw from his verandah, he gently opened a window in front, and imitated the sound of which he had heard them speak. Their quick ears soon caught it, and, amidst unmistakable signs of terror, they slunk away from the spot. In 1801, Captain Grant found them in dread of "Bogle!" saying, "Me murreg jarrin" (much afraid).

Among the charms carried, as a protection against evil spirits or more substantial foes, was a sacred ball, which, placed in a net of opossum yarn, was hung in the girdle. The missionary, Threlkeld, succeeded in getting an inspection of one in his study. The poor man—who was conscious all the while of breaking one of the customs of his tribe, and who, in spite of his semi-civilisation, could not shake off the influence of superstition—stood by trembling, with the perspiration streaming from his forehead. After unravelling many yards of yarn prepared from the fur of the opossum, the gentleman found the enclosure to be a white semi-pellucid piece of quartz, about the size of a pigeon's egg. This might be as efficacious for the purpose when swung round as the sacred cow's tail of the Amina of Africa. The Romans held crystal balls, or Bactyli, in reverence. In Scotland and Ireland, to this day, persons believe in the efficacy of magic stones to cure diseases, as the Pixie stone of Cornwall.

This devil appears to fly about only at night; but he may be easily kept off by the maintenance of ever so small a fire before the wirlie. He is known as the Tulugal on the Muruya river, when he appears, but only to the doctors of course, in the guise of an old man with long legs, to give him the capacity for catching his victims, and with short arms to grasp them well. He is reported to possess a shocking bad wife. But in this respect he is not singular; for, according to the Rev. Dr. Braim, Archdeacon of Portland,

Digitized by Google

Koin of Lake Macquarie has a wife much worse than himself. She is known under the three names of Mail-Kun, Bim-poin, and Tippa-Kalleun. He only frightens people, by picking them up at night, carrying them rapidly through the air, when they feel an unpleasant choking sensation, but afterwards good-humouredly setting them down at daylight in their former place. But the wife cunningly creeps under the ground while the natives are asleep, and places a large bag net beneath them. Unconsciously they drop through the sod into the trap, but are never brought back again. It is currently reported that she roasts and eats her victims.

There is another spirit who indulges in a little fun, while gratifying his malice. He will meet a blackfellow and propose a fight, giving him at the same time a bigger waddy than he retains for himself. He first presents his own hard skull for a crack, which of course makes no impression upon the corporeal demon. The unhappy mortal has then to put forward his head for the return stroke. This is effectual. Then skewering the body, the Evil One walks off home with it for his evening repast. This Koyorowen is also blessed with a helpmeet of kindred tastes and sympathies. Kurriwilban is provided with a sharp horn upon each shoulder, with which she impales unsuspecting mortals, and afterwards conveys them to the spit. This agreeable pair in no way interfere with each other's pleasures; for, by mutual agreement, the devil has all the women, while his partner appropriates the men to herself.

A sort of devil appears to have been formed by Nooreele of the Murray, in the form of a serpent. The name Mindye strikingly reminds us of the old English notion of Mind-yard, which, by curling his tail round the world, kept it from tumbling to pieces. The small-pox in one place was called Monola Mindye, the dust of the Mindye, from being raised by that evil genius. The scars were recognised as Lillipook Mindye, his scales. The great whirlwinds of dust which rise upon the Australian plains are produced by the flourishes of his tail. Mr. Parker judiciously observes, in alluding to this tradition, "I think in their ceremonies and superstitions may be traced the obscure and nearly obliterated relics of the ancient ophilatria, or serpent worship, still extant in India and Africa."

The Wau-wai is a snake living in the water, and very destructive to man. The Oorundoo dwells under the Murray, and has the reputation of coming out occasionally to drown the bad wives of the tribe. A lizard, now removed to heaven, once visited Lake Macquarie in fierce anger. He had noticed from his celestial abode that some of the natives thereabout killed certain insects which usually abound in the hair of savages. A number had been so sacrilegious as to roast the vermin in the fire. The perpetrators of such a deed were brought together by the lizard, and crushed to death by a huge stone brought from an Olympian quarry. They who had been content with simply cracking the favourites of heaven were speared by a long reed, procured from some marsh of Elysium.

Fairies, as well as ghosts, received the homage of native faith. The Balumbal of New South Wales were kind and gentle spirits, living upon a mountain to the eastward, and subsisting upon honey. Mr. Thomas assures us, of the Port Phillip blacks, that "they have an idea of ghosts, spirits, and other imaginary beings." Their water sprites are the Turong; while those on land are the Potkoorok; and those living in caves are the Tambora. Singularly enough, they are all females, and all move about without heads. The Esquimaux, who resemble them in many particulars, have Ingnersoit, or sea sprites; Sillagiksortok, or of ice; Ignersoit, of fire; Tunuarolit, subterranean ones; besides, Tunnersoit and Erkiglit.

A ghost appeared to a lubra, and announced her speedy death. She told the story next day, with most melancholy forebodings. In two days after she was dead. Many similar cases might be extracted from the works of authors of repute at the present day. Some souls were supposed to live in trees and eat lizards. Among some tribes to the westward it was held that the souls of the unborn wandered about among the grass trees. The Irish on the west coast, until lately, saw the souls of departed relatives in the butterflies flitting from flower to flower. The following supernatural story is given upon the authority of Mr. M'Kellar, of the Broken River, Victoria:—"They tell," says he, "with every appearance of firm belief, of a warrior, surprised by many enemies, and forced to flight, being closely pursued by another possessed by supernatural powers. Both exerted their most powerful charms to disable each other, but for each 'gibber' one cast from his mouth the other cast another. At length he who was pursued spat a 'gibber,' and took refuge in it; the pursuer dashed in it after him, and shivered it into fragments. In the confusion, the one pursued escaped with a twig, of the diameter of a pipe stem, and so baffled his adversary."

Our dark friends seldom quitted the camp fire at night, for fear of encountering malignant spirits; we know of more refined people, of more than one sex, who have similar timidity at the witching hour of night. They have as much respect for their doctors or sorcerers as many of our London maidens

Digitized by Google

have for fortune-telling astrologers. A friend of ours saw an odd ceremony performed by one of these gentlemen on three sable ladies laden with future cares. They stood before him in usual native undress. He looked at each attentively, catching the eye of the person. Drawing back to a stump, he uttered an incantation. Then advancing to the women, he blew on their bodies. This was repeated several times. It was doubtless intended to procure safety and deliverance in the forthcoming hour of suffering. Mr. Eyre mentions that the Murray boylyas or doctor used to carry upon state occasions a stick ornamented with feathers; he conjured rain by certain crystals, and charmed death away with a sacred power. Evil spirits may be driven out of the air by divers means. Peter the Great ordered all Russian bells to be rung, to frighten away the demon that enabled the Swedes to beat him at Narva. In the wilds of Port Phillip they had a simpler contrivance. The doctor seized the Mooyum Karr, a piece of oval board with a string attached to it; and, with a few hearty, whirring swings, would effectually purify the atmosphere from the presence of such malignities.

The doctors of the tribe have other means of exorcising the evil spirit, as by spitting, blowing, and the waving of reeds or branches. None but them are able to see this mysterious being. Possibly they are enabled to do this from their ability to render themselves invisible, as easily as the Scotch black witches of old; which power in the old women was as steadfastly believed in by judges, philosophers, divines, and all good Christians of Britain not a long time ago, as now by the dark wanderers of the Australian forests.

They are by no means harmless characters. By means of the sacred bone they can with impunity execute their vengeance. This they procure in the following manner:—They sleep upon the grave of a person recently deceased, when a bone of the dead man rushes through the earth into the body of the sleeper, inflicting a slight pain like the sting of an ant. There it remains until they wish to kill some one; when, by an act of volition, the bone starts forth into the victim with such force as to cause his death. These Boylyas, Warrawarras, or doctors, can, like the Angekkoks of Greenland, by transformations, carry themselves into the camp of an opposing tribe, and so accomplish their vindictive intentions. Even at a distance, by extraordinary incantations, they are able to exhibit their mischievous propensities. Thus Mr. Protector Robinson, referring to a border race, says: "A plague from a neighbouring tribe, who had the power they said of inflicting it, was apprehended. They were greatly excited, and entreated my interference. The circumstances were that a chief had died from natural causes, but which his people attributed to incantation of another tribe. A victim was required, and the proscribed, an innocent person, put to death, and the pestilence so alarmingly apprehended was the consequence."

Those men are the doctors of the tribe, alleviating pain or removing disease by charms, manipulations, and certain less mysterious but more probable curative agencies. By the supposed extraction of a bone or stone from a diseased part, the cause of the malady, they resemble the celebrated Myalists or Obeah men among the negroes, who are described as extracting nails and other substances from the flesh of the sufferer; though our black sorcerers are not so clever as they in catching troublesome walking ghosts, and quieting them in a small coffin. Such men, aided by the old women of the tribe, exercise a most tyrannical influence upon the rest. They are the upholders of those native habits which form the great bar to the civilisation of the aborigine; as Captain Grey truly remarks, "So long as he is enthralled by these customs, which on the other hand are so ingeniously devised as to have a direct tendency to annihilate any effort that is made to overthrow them."

Man-making is attended with several mysterious and often torturing ceremonies, varying according to the tribe. Different nations and religions have analogous celebrations of the youth assuming manhood. The American Indian and South Sea Islander undertake their solemn duties at the age of fourteen or fifteen. The initiation of youth among our blackfellows takes place in the darkness of night, the seclusion of the forest, and in the absence of the women. Like as with the Egyptian and Greek mysteries, the noviciate undergoes considerable suffering during the process. Previously and afterwards, for several days, he must eat of nothing prepared by the hand of a female. The Indian is similarly restricted. Among some Port Phillip tribes the hair is plucked out by the roots from certain parts of the body, and green leaves placed under the armpits. Charmed pebbles placed in a bag are to be worn round the neck, and never exhibited to a woman; the dust of these stones has great virtue in sickness. Other masonic intelligence is to be withheld from the less sacred, or more tale-telling sex. Occasionally a lad is smothered with mud or dust, or covered with grease, and has his hair nearly all shaved off. With some he is said to be sent to the Kipper Grounds, and loses a tooth or a joint of the little finger.

Digitized by Google

He speaks in a low tone for weeks afterwards. One tribe will place the boy upon a man's shoulders, and the friend will pierce his own chest to let blood fall upon his youthful ward. Incantations are constantly being employed by the old men. After all this, the youth may adorn his hair with two kangaroo teeth and emu feathers. The tatooing or marking is usually done at a later period. In South Australia circumcision is performed at about fourteen by one supposed to be inspired. Only in North Australia besides has the same rite been observed, and not in Victoria or New South Wales. The effect of the ceremony upon lads is to make them more than ever devoted to the customs of the tribes. There is no doubt but that the exhibition of certain cabalistic signs by a passer-by has caused many a steady, hopeful servant to throw up his charge, change his trousers for a dirty blanket, and the hut for a wirlie.

The "Jump-up Whitefellow" doctrine is odd enough. Buckley's life was saved because he was believed to be the embodied spirit of a deceased friend of the tribe. Mr. Wedge wrote in 1835:—"They certainly entertain the idea that after death they will again exist in the form of white men;" though he thinks it an idea borrowed from the whites. It is not without consolation to the savage; for, when one was being swung off on the Melbourne gallows, he exclaimed, "Very good: me jump up whitefellow: plenty sixpence." Mr. Parker states,—"It is remarkable that the designation given to the white inhabitants of the colony in most of the dialects of which I have heard (Amydeet, Jajowrong, Amerjig, Koligan, Amygai, &c.), appear to be identical with the words used to describe the soul when separated from the body." The belief is not confined to Port Phillip; Captain Grey, when in Western Australia, was recognised and most affectionately greeted and claimed as a returned son by an uncommon ugly old lubra. A gentleman of Moonie Ponds told us, that while down in Port Fairy district, an old woman recognised in his little girl a departed daughter of hers. There is an evident relation here to the Asiatic doctrine of the transmigration of souls. The Buddhist records inform us respecting a certain sanctified priest, who made his spirit enter the body of a man dead, to personate a character. The several incantations of Vishnu have relation to it. The most distinguished men of learning and philosophy in England, America, France, and Germany are obtaining fresh light upon the nature of the soul. They do not see why the soul that was in Socrates may not reappear in some more modern *savant;* in short, there is reason to hope, that with a little more study, those leaders of the intellect of the Old World will arrive at the standard of mind as existing in the rude Port Phillip savage, and honestly avow their conviction of the truth of that sublime dogma, "Jump up Whitefellow."

Among the superstitions has been placed their belief in the fabulous Bunyip. This monster was said to issue from the lakes, and carry off children, and even women; the natives never attempted to kill one. Some early stockkeepers asserted the presence of a large amphibious animal, covered with hair. But since the more complete settlement of the country, the bunyip has disappeared, to dwell with the banished ghosts and fairies of the olden time. Among other notions, is that of some spirit stealing down a tree at night, when the fire goes out, and so causing the death of the party. Yet little dependence is to be placed upon this assertion, for the natives invariably seek in more substantial beings than ghosts the means of revenging such death. Sometimes upon the departure of one of the tribe, the others will describe a circle on the ground, place an insect within the ring, observe the direction in which it crawls, and, running on in that direction, will kill the first strange blackfellow they meet, take away his kidney fat, and rub it over their bodies, as a charm against evil.

There is an allusion to this agency in the following pleasingly rendered song:—

Muldaubie, thy ill-omened cry
Troubles the sleeper's ear;
But if thy shadow meet his eye,
He knows that death is near.

Begone, our boys we need,
To throw the quivering spear;
And let their young limbs bleed
For all they hold most dear.

Then turn thy evil form away
From where the black man roams,
Nor come at eve or dawn of day
To desolate their homes.

The native customs respecting articles of diet may be included among their superstitions. Thus, a young man may not eat the black duck, emu, young kangaroo from the pouch, eagle, snake, native companion, bandicoot, and old man opossum. Young girls, before the age of puberty, could not take, among other things, the young from the pouch, the white crane, bandicoot, native companion, or old male of wallaby. Married young women must not taste the male opossum, black duck, native companion, snake, young from pouch, bandicoot or emu egg. Women, during certain periodical seasons, must not eat fish nor go near water. No female could eat fish, at any time, caught under cliffs where they

Digitized by Google

spawn. The wives, however, were not compelled, as the Greenlanders, to eat no food in childbed excepting what is taken and prepared by the husband. Married men under forty years could not eat of the young from the pouch, the red kangaroo, crane, or native companion. But the old men and women may eat what they please.

This taboo of certain things is one of the few points in common with the Polynesians. There is also, in some places, a sort of taboo of things selected by a tribe or family as a kind of badge, called a Kobong. Governor Grey declared that the Kobong had elements in common with the taboo of other people. Men cannot marry women of the same Kobong. Mr. Latham, the ethnologist, asks this question: "Is the plant or animal adopted by a particular family selected because it was previously viewed with a mysterious awe, or is it invested with the attributes of sacro-sanctity because it has been chosen by the family?" We doubt if the Australians can give any other than their usual answer to such interrogations: "Me not know; blackfellow always do the like o' that."

Perhaps their dances may be regarded as superstitions as well as amusements. Their recurrence at full moon has induced some to connect them with ancient religious rites of worship to that orb. That there is a probability of a spiritual meaning, although not appreciated by the natives at present, will appear from a description of some of their dances. We may refer to one seen by Mr. Hull, and described under the head of "Songs and Dances." At Lake Macquarie was a dance, called the *Porrobung*, from *por*, to drop down; in which, at certain set intervals, the performers suddenly dropped down in the mystic ring.

Our good missionary, the Rev. Mr. Ridley, has the following account of a remarkable corrobory:—"At Burudtha, on the Barwon, I met a company of forty blacks, engaged in a ceremony in which amusement was combined with some mystical purpose. A chorus of twenty, old and young, were singing and beating time with boomerangs. Though the words and notes of their songs are few,—six or eight words, with three or four variations of the same number of notes, being repeated for hours,—they observe very correct time and harmony. There were a dozen more looking on. Suddenly from under a sheet of bark darted a man, with his body whitened by pipe-clay, his head and face coloured with lines of red and yellow, and a tuft of feathers fixed by means of a stick two feet above the crown of his head. He stood twenty minutes perfectly still, gazing upwards. An aboriginal who stood by told me he was looking for the ghosts of dead men. At last he began to move very slowly, and soon rushed to and fro at full speed, flourishing a branch as if to drive away some foes invisible to us. When I thought his pantomime must be almost over, ten more, similarly adorned, appeared from behind the trees, and the whole party joined in a brisk conflict with their mysterious assailants. The music became louder, as now and then the actors came stamping up to the choir; and at last, after some rapid evolutions in which they put forth all their strength, they rested from the exciting toil which they had kept up all night and for some hours after sunrise. They seemed satisfied that the ghosts had been driven away for twelve months."

Mr. Protector Parker's description of another is too remarkable to be omitted—"I once, and but once, saw a singular ceremonious dance, on a Loddon station, which was called 'Yepene amy gai,' or dance of separate spirits. It was avowedly a novel affair to nearly all the actors, and was taught by an old man to the westward, since dead. In this ceremony, after a very singular and not unpleasing dance with branches in either hand, all, with the exception of two old men, who were leaders, came together to one spot, and gradually bent towards the ground, becoming slower and slower in their motions till they were entirely prostrate. They remained perfectly motionless some time, and a mournful chant was sung over them, and they were said to be 'dead.' The two old men then went round them several times, and seemed to be driving something away with their boughs, singing at the same time with increased energy till they became very loud and rapid. Then at a given signal they all sprang to their feet, and recommenced their dance. They were then said to be 'alive.'"

Their superstitions of an astronomical character may be thus roughly rendered:—

The aborigines have said
(Or made the story out of head)
That those bright orbs which gem the sky
Have not been always up so high;
But lowly, on this dull, tame earth,
All heavenly bodies had their birth.

At first, 'tis said, the moon arose,
Though why she left no native knows.
Perhaps some lunatic down here,
In making love, put her in fear
She'd lose some spangles of her glory;
So sprang she to an upper story.

The stars remained a while below,
But were constrained at length to go;
For, shamed to see the queen of night
So cold and pale, so lone in sight,
They rose, a shining throng, to greet
Their mistress in her high retreat.

Digitized by Google

A milk-white stream, in which of old
They often bathed, as we are told,
They carried up with them that day,
Though now 'tis called the "milky way;"
And there within its bed are found
Some thousands all the heavens round.

Another strange event occurred;—
(Which only rests on native word)
How cockatoos, a noisy tribe,
Were sky-ward thrown, in feather'd pride,
Ordained to change from snowy crowd
To fleecy Magellanic cloud.

Amidst the homes of starry race
Was left a dreary, darkened space,
Which there a black lagoon became;
In which the *Yuras* of ill fame—
Those slimy monsters of the sky—
Were doomed to all eternity.

A constellation fair one sees,
Which learned name the Pleiades;
Aboriginal tradition
Tells of maidens' fond ambition
To be in heaven with others found,
Still digging roots from out the ground.

And yet they toil no selfish life;
Each does her duty as a wife
To feed her hunting husband there,—
Orion—as we else declare;
But who on Venus has his eye,
That Boyl-ya dame now raised on high.

The moon is seen to wax and wane—
To go, and then appear again:
The natives say this loss of body
Is owing to the sun's rude waddy,
Which when descending makes her wince;
This twice a month has happened since.

However disposed to be amused at the silly fancies of our rude natives, if we look at the popular belief of Christianised Englishmen in the Norman era, the laugh may be on the other side. Grave men wrote Latin treatises, in which appeared such refined ideas as,—that the world was flat, and 12,000 miles long by 6000 broad; that the sun was red in the morning, because of the reflection of the fires of hell; that there were women near Babylon with long beards; that somewhere in Africa men carried eyes in their breasts; that pepper was black from the fires of forests to drive away the serpents; and that in India gigantic ants dug gold, and sold it to merchants for young camels to eat. Even in the days of Shakespeare we have a learned man writing to disprove the Englishman's notion, that bears licked their cubs into shape; that elephants slept leaning against trees; that diamonds were softened by the blood of goats; that griffins existed; that moles had no eyes; that cinnamon, ginger, cloves and nutmeg grew on the same tree; and that the Basil insect propagated scorpions in the brains of man. The Royal Society of London wrote to a doctor in Java, to know if it were true that there was a tree near Sumatra that sank into the earth at a touch, that had a worm at its root, and that whendry, changed into stone.

MISSIONS.

Missions for the reclamation and conversion of the Port Phillip natives have been established at different periods of our colonial history. As by Lord Stanley's Act it was ruled that fifteen per cent. of the Land Fund should be appropriated to the original inhabitants, there was no lack of Government aid to the benevolent projects. Sanguine expectations were excited. The South Sea Islanders had removed their gods, the rude New Zealanders had submitted to the gentle Christian yoke, and the bloody Fijians had ceased their cannibalism, and bowed their hearts to Jehovah. Why then, it was said, should not the Australians be gathered into the same fold?

But the history of our missions has been one of failure. It was soon found that it was somewhat different to go among a people already corrupted by contact with bad Europeans, who had no settled home, and who had no religious conceptions, to that of labour among men in their own independent dominions, who had stationary villages, and who held some religious faith. A friend of the missions here thus very strongly expressed his views about the aborigines:—"They live entirely upon the chase, and are thus obliged everlastingly to roam. They have the misfortune, too, to come into contact, not with the Christianity, but with the crime and the convicts of Europe. The missionary, therefore, is to them a walking lie; the book he unfolds, an enigma; and his people, a swarm of unprincipled banditti, the invaders of their country, and the plunderers of their patrimonial inheritance." The historian of the United States Exploring Expedition says:—"The lack of religious feeling in these natives has already been mentioned. The missionaries have found it impossible, after many years' labour, to make the slightest impression upon them."

It is idle to talk about their want of intellect to comprehend, of moral power to sympathise with, of fixedness of purpose to follow out, the truths of our holy religion. Mr. Sohier, the phrenologist of Melbourne, asserts the ample development of their organ of veneration and of their reflective faculties, as an argument in their favour. There is no doubt that the powerful antagonism of national habits and customs, with the total want of spiritual conception, arising from ages of dark isolation from the rest of humanity, have indisposed them to listen with any earnestness to the voice of the

Digitized by Google

teacher. We are not willing to adopt the view of the learned Mr. Rusden, a warm friend to the blacks, that "They have failed to civilise and convert the aborigines, not because the aborigines were irreclaimable, but because the missions were established on erroneous principles."

The want of faith in progress retards effort. The Dutch Cape Boers, speaking of the hopelessness of missions, exclaimed to Dr. Livingstone, "You might as well teach the baboons on the rocks as these Africans;" and yet among no people has the Evangelist had more success. As to the zeal, prudence, ability, and piety of the missionaries, we can speak from personal knowledge of several of them, that they who have struggled in the darkness of Australia were fully equal in head and heart to their brethren in more prosperous fields. Though different reasons may be urged for failure, yet the fact is sufficiently demonstrated. It is remarkable that little or no success in missions has followed efforts among races most like themselves, as the Fuegians, &c.

The difficulties with the adults led the friends of religion to seek after the youth. Several years ago, Mr. Protector Robinson, of Melbourne, proposed to Mr. Protector Moorhouse, of Adelaide, that they should exchange a certain number of lads, it being thought the introduction into a strange country with strange blacks might release them from the force of native habits. Certain it is that we knew a Port Phillip boy in the mission school in Adelaide who was far more attentive than the rest. Mr. Langhorne, of Melbourne, in 1838, recommended forcible restraint of the young for three or four years, and that they be brought from a distance to the Yarra settlement. In answer to this report, the Governor at Sydney, Sir Richard Bourke, thus expressed his opinion: "The Governor approves of your endeavouring to induce the adult aborigines to leave their children with you for education, but cannot consent to any restraint being placed on their inclinations if they desire at any time to withdraw from your care."

But the difficulties to be encountered in the establishment of such schools have been so lucidly expressed by Bishop Short of Adelaide, that we cannot do better than cite his lordship's words:—"If the schools," he writes, "were established in the bush, then there was the counteracting influence of the elder natives, the filth of the 'wirlie,' the contamination of native customs and rites, and the seductions of the immemorial corrobory. No sooner was the grown up girl or boy in some measure trained, instructed, and impressed with the truth of religion, than the former was claimed as the affianced wife of some elder kinsman; and the latter was summoned to go through the initiatory rites, by which he was admitted to the rank of 'young man,' and permitted to take a wife, if he could get one."

The disinclination of parents to allow their children to leave them is thus pathetically set forth by one of the missionaries:—"In whatsoever direction I go, even at the distance of forty to sixty miles, the parents conceal the children, as soon as they hear that a missionary approaches their camp; and when I come upon them by surprise, I have the grievance to observe these little ones running into the bushes, or into the bed of the river with the utmost rapidity."

The missions have encountered something very like opposition from some of the colonists. A higher standard of morals was set up than was quite agreeable to ancient bush manners. The missionaries were regarded as the friends of the blacks against the whites. Their interference in cases of cruelty and their bold denunciation of licentiousness created some active enmity. A rude squatter of the border wrote thus:—"The settlers would be willing to employ them as mechanics or labourers were they taught trades instead of psalm-singing." And some pretended fears were expressed that the native race would become so enervated at the missions as to cease hunting, and become a nation of paupers dependent upon Government support.

To the honour of the missionaries be it said, that they always espoused the cause of the unhappy outcasts of the wilds, and daily did they mourn over the injustice and evil example of their own civilised countrymen.

The Rev. Mr. Ridley, who laboured most enthusiastically among the aborigines, following them up in their camps, and living in their midst, thus chronicles one difficulty of missions:—"One poor fellow on the Mooni addressed me, in a long pathetic harangue, on the wrongs which his people have suffered at the hands of the white men; and urged upon me, as I had been telling the blackfellows not to do evil, to go round and tell the white men not to wrong the blacks, especially not to take away their gins." On another occasion, after an address to a tribe, one poor creature came up, with a sorrowful tale about a white man in the neighbourhood, who had seduced his wife away from him; and entreated the preacher to write him a letter, threatening to send a constable after him if he did not at once return the woman. He then added, in his native tongue, "You tell him that the Great Master in heaven is very angry with him about it." Alas! the Christian Englishman

Digitized by Google

would have less fear of the Great Master than the savage heathen would have.

The variety of dialects, and the very disappearance of languages with declining tribes, compelled the friends of the aborigines to depend upon English as, after all, the best means of communication. This was to be regretted, for a man is more moved by being addressed about his soul in his own tongue. As one of the teachers wrote:—"They urged me not to speak to them in their own language, for it frightened them so." The want of suitable terms in the native tongue, led the translators, rather absurdly enough, to introduce Greek and Hebrew words as well as English ones, to supply the deficiency. The limited area over which a language was spoken considerably diminished the missionary's power of usefulness.

In a discussion upon this subject in the Victoria Church of England Assembly of 1856, it was declared, "That the diminution of numbers in each tribe exposed to contact with Europeans, and the decadence of dialects one by one, depriving missionaries of opportunities of obtaining converts, and destroying the value of their acquisition of the native language, combine to show how helpless is the endeavour to convert the numerous remnants of tribes by an establishment at any one place, unless numbers of different tribes can be congregated at it and trained to the use of one common language." It was recommended, therefore, that the use of aboriginal languages be discouraged at such an establishment.

A mission station by the Yarra Yarra, on the site of the Botanical Gardens, was formed under Mr. George Langhorne soon after the arrival of Captain Lonsdale, in 1836. The Yarra establishment under Mr. Langhorne was of short continuance. That gentleman officiated as a sort of protector as well as missionary, receiving a salary of £150. He was assisted by Mr. John Thomas Smith, afterwards the Mayor of Melbourne, who then acted as schoolmaster to the blacks upon a stipend of £40 a-year. We have the following interesting account of the institution, from the pen of Mr. Backhouse, the Quaker missionary, in company with his friend Mr. George Washington Walker, in November, 1837:—"Last night, we returned with our friends to the missionary station, to lodge. The reserve for the missionary institution is of 800 acres. This, though but a small extent of land for a pastoral country, was considered sufficient to devote to the object, at so short a distance from the town. The buildings are temporary ones, of mud and plaster, with thatched roofs; they are not yet sufficiently extensive to accommodate the mission family and twelve native boys who are already under tuition. The design is, to educate them in English, and to teach them useful occupations, and then to let them mix themselves with the European population; with whom it is hoped, by these means, to put them upon a level."

The Wesleyan mission at Buntingdale, on the Barwon, some forty miles west of Geelong, was initiated in 1836. The missionaries were Messrs. Hurst and Tuckfield. The sums granted by the Government towards its support were as follows:—1836, £221; 1837, £664; 1838, £1460; 1839, £631; 1840, £795; 1841, £450; 1842, £315; &c. For a time some hopeful signs appeared. In one report the missionaries state, "About half the tribe are comfortably settled in slab huts, which they have erected for themselves." Again, "Nearly all the tribe are beginning to make their own clothes. During the last four months they have made twenty-seven pairs of trousers, twelve shirts, twelve coats, twenty-two dresses, and some braces." Several acres of land were brought into cultivation. As to intellectual progress, we learn that in 1843 "a class of boys who are learning to read in English can answer with readiness more than half the questions in the 'Conference Catechism.' They have commenced with geography." In a higher degree their labours seemed blessed, when they were able to write, "six or seven might faithfully be reported as being converted." And yet very soon after this the signs of rapid decline appeared, disputes with other tribes arose, blood was shed, the mission premises were deserted, the teachers retired, and the supposed converts were naked vagabonds of the bush again.

A worthy effort was made by the Baptist body in Melbourne, in 1845, to gather some native children together. The Rev. Thomas Ham and Messrs. Lush and Kerr were its active promoters. An establishment was made on a tongue of land at the junction of the Merri Creek and Yarra. Mr. Peacock was the first teacher; he was succeeded by Mr. Edgar. In 1846 there were fourteen boys and seven girls. The mission lasted but a few years; it was found impracticable to retain the children, because of the parents wishing them to follow them, and because the men sought the fellowship of the coloured young ladies at the mission house. Assaults had been made upon the nunnery, and the not vestal virgins in a most Sabine manner had been withdrawn, with the smiling consent of the abducted. Yet fruits were not wanting; some acquired a good knowledge of arithmetic, &c., and most could read in our New Testament. The singing was admired. Mr. Kerr supplied us with an anecdote of this Merri Creek establishment,

Digitized by Google

which illustrated the maternal feeling. Having brought the children to town for examination at the Baptist Chapel, they were provided with beds in Melbourne that night, because it was too late to go home. But their absence was soon known at the native camp, and some mischievous person spread the report of the children being kidnapped and conveyed on shipboard *en route* for *white-fellow's country*. Early in the morning the town was filled with lamentations; ebon Rachels weeping for their children. To satisfy them, they were brought before the youths, when mothers ran with streaming eyes toward their offspring, fondled over them, and exhibited the wildest demonstration of joy.

In April, 1844, the Church of England Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sent, through Lord Stanley, at the suggestion of the Melbourne Branch, the following proposition to our Sydney authorities — Port Phillip then being a Province of New South Wales. Lamenting over the moral destitution of Europeans and aborigines, they undertook to provide for the religious instruction of both parties, on condition of receiving a moiety of support from the Government, and the use of the so-called village reserves. This offer was not accepted by our Colonial rulers, who questioned the propriety of giving such advantages to one denomination of Christians, especially the control of village reserves, in which townships might some day be established.

In the year 1851, the Rev. F. C. Taeger was sent out by that noblest of missionary societies, the Moravian Church. Governor Latrobe, always a friend to religious effort, and the son of a Moravian clergyman, hastened to render assistance to the project of the German brother. A site for the mission was selected as far distant as possible from any settlement. An aboriginal reserve, of twenty-five square miles, was proclaimed, near Lake Boga, in the scrubby desert towards the Murray River. The first difficulty was the excitement of a prejudice against the mission, which prevented the natives ever approaching the place. The neighbouring squatters resented the benevolent visit as an intrusion. The outburst of the gold fever soon after placed the brethren in more serious trouble. Supplies could only be obtained from Melbourne; and, with carriage at £200 a ton, the poverty-stricken missionaries were exposed to great hardships—yet they still held on to this work. A darker day arrived. Their friend and protector, Mr. Latrobe, left the colony; persecution increased; and annoyances multiplied. One of the richest men in Victoria had one of his stations in that locality. He applied for and obtained a pre-emptive grant of 640 acres, which he selected within the very limits of the mission premises. Remonstrances were urged by Melbourne clergymen and others, but no effect was produced on the Government. The neighbouring settlers pulled down the very fences which the good men had erected with their own hands; and, thoroughly disheartened and despairing, the German missionaries took their departure from our shores.

At the close of 1858, a renewed effort under better auspices was made by the Moravians. Brothers Spieseke and Hagenauer established themselves in the Wimmera district; and most cordially do we hope that the honour of the colony will not again be compromised in any further injustice to so good an undertaking. Mr. Spieseke is saddened under the trials before him. Speaking of the natives, he says—"Their moral condition is so depraved and low, it is rather difficult to get at them." But, with the faith of a Christian, he exclaims—"I am still in hope, for I rest on the command of God."

While staying a while at Neuwied, a Moravian settlement on the Rhine, we were told by a Brother that the Australian mission gave them real satisfaction.

We forbear introducing any account of the missionary efforts of Messrs. Robinson, Dredge, Sievwright, Parker and Thomas, as that will more properly appear under the heading of the "Protectorate."

The Church of England Colonial Mission, recently established, has, with judicious prudence, selected Yelta as the site of settlement, it being at the junction of the Darling and Murray rivers, where a large population exists, and by which the aborigines in their travels are often passing. Under the zealous attention of the honorary secretary, R. H. Budd, Esq., it is thought now hopefully progressing. The two missionaries are indefatigable in labour, though little fruit is yet observable. Provisions are distributed, with the view of collecting the natives. Industrial pursuits, the school, and religious teaching, are the means employed for their social regeneration. Amidst all the discouragements, it is the simple Christian duty still to go forward. Although the writer has publicly advocated the claims of this interesting mission, he has not failed to declare that his hope of success is small indeed, while the drinking customs of European society oppose so formidable a barrier to missionary effort here and elsewhere.

As the Christian reader may be interested in knowing what has been done in the neighbouring colonies as well as in Victoria, for the heathen aborigines, a brief sketch of this history will be now given.

Thirty years were allowed to pass in New

Digitized by Google

South Wales before any thought was directed to the poor creatures' souls. Governor Macquarie, about 1818, formed a station called Black Town, near Richmond, which had no lengthened existence. The Wesleyan native institution arose in 1821, but soon declined. In 1824, a deputation from the London Missionary Society arrived at Sydney, on its way to and from the interesting South Sea Missions. The heart of the colonists was stirred up to do something for their heathen, and the Lake Macquarie Mission was the result. The Rev. Mr. Threlkeld, a man of learning and piety, wrought with untiring energy; and at first, with very satisfactory results. But when the Government required a report of the station in 1842, the lamentable fact became known that but two of the interesting tribe were alive! and so, by the order of Governor Gibbs, the premises were abandoned.

The friends of the Church of England, at the earnest remonstrances of the ever active Archdeacon Broughton, afterwards bishop of Sydney, formed the Wellington Valley Mission, in 1830. This, like the rest, has proved a failure. Mr. Gunther, the teacher, was obliged to say in one of his reports:—"Among all the young men who, for years past, have been more or less attracted to the mission, there is only one who affords some satisfaction and encouragement. He has gradually shaken off the yoke and dominion of the elderly men, and has banished many superstitious notions from his mind." The good man could not tell us that he had received any better natives in their places.

An interesting German Mission was established at the Brook Kedron, Moreton Bay, in 1838. Personally acquainted with one of the brethren, the Rev. Mr. Niquet, now Lutheran clergyman of Ballaarat, we learnt from his lips a sad recital of suffering. Without resources, away from English residents, they endured great privation for several years. Their lives were sometimes in imminent peril from the inroads of wild blackfellows. Living upon the produce of their garden plots, clad partly in skins of the kangaroo and the opossum, they persevered for nine years, till most reluctantly they discovered that their labours were wholly lost, and then they retired from their dried-up Brook Kedron.

A Roman Catholic mission was formed under most favourable auspices. Means were plentifully supplied by private subscriptions and Government grants. The establishment was made on Stradbroke Island, Moreton Bay, with natives who seldom saw a white face among them. Four Italian monks of approved learning and zeal undertook the mission. But like the rest, this failed also. Though the island, twenty miles long, was but a bed of sand with forests, Europeans came even there to settle, and, as usual, blasted the prospects of the missionaries.

In South Australia laudable exertions have been employed for the conversion of the aborigines. Two years after the formation of the colony, the Rev. Mr. Klose, a Moravian from Dresden, established a mission in Adelaide. A flourishing Government Native Institution in Adelaide was for several years ably and devotedly managed by Mr. Protector Moorhouse, assisted by the resident teacher, Mr. Ross, formerly of the British and Foreign School Society. A Sabbath-school in connection with the youth for years continued under the zealous and kind superintendence of Mr. Moorhouse, and Mr. W. Peacock, a true friend of the dark race. We were often favoured in being present at these religious exercises, and aiding in the interesting movement. A large native school also existed at Walkerville. The Rev. W. Schürmann struggled for a long time to organise a mission at Port Lincoln. The New Methodist connexion also attempted to establish a mission in Adelaide in 1844. The Rev. Mr. Meyer, who as well as his fellow-countryman, Mr. Schürmann, published a valuable grammar of the native language, opened a school for youth at Encounter Bay in 1845. But all these institutions failed in doing any lasting good for the heathen Australians.

The only existing successful mission (although all are for a time successful) is that of Poonindie, near Port Lincoln, South Australia. Archdeacon Hale suggested that the only hope they had was to get the young people away from their friends and tribe, and induce them to form a settlement themselves. Being a man of thorough Christian piety, untiring energy, tact, and prudence, he succeeded. We were in Adelaide in 1851 when the attempt was made to withdraw the young people from the Adelaide school. Several of the lads were married to girls, placed on shipboard, and hurried off two hundred miles, to Port Lincoln. When the tribes discovered this fearful invasion of their native privileges, this infringement of native customs, a violent excitement was produced. Fierce invectives were uttered against the plotters of this mischief. Women gathered about the doors of the Institution, abusing all connected with it. All the girls there remaining were immediately withdrawn by their friends into the bush, and a Kaffir difficulty on a small scale arose. But undeterred by threats, and unmoved by the most pathetic remonstrances, the Archdeacon continued his work. The Government voted £200 a-year towards the support of the mission.

Digitized by Google

It was at first placed on Boston Island, in the harbour of Port Lincoln, but the want of water necessitated its removal to the mainland. Of sixty native colonists of Poonindie twenty-four were married. Land was cultivated, flocks were tended, houses were erected, and comfort reigned. In the language of Mr. Hawkes, a visitor, we read of "a village of civilised aborigines living happily together, employing their time in cultivating a magnificent estate; and while providing by their own labour for their temporal wants, not neglecting their all-important spiritual necessities, but daily seeking to acquire a further knowledge of their Creator and Redeemer, and striving to worship Him in spirit and truth." We like not to dim the lustre of this brilliant vision; but truth compels us to say that, with the well-known fact before us that only some three or four children have been born to these dozen couples during a number of years, we have no confidence in the ultimate success of this most interesting of all the native missions.

Some interest is now excited on behalf of a mission to the Cooper's Creek natives, who behaved so kindly to Captain Sturt and to poor King. There is more hope of success there than with our blacks of Victoria. Analogies are so wanting, associations are so unfortunate, native customs are so passively antagonistic, and the very genius of religion is so foreign to their natures, that but small results of teaching can be expected within two generations. In the meantime the race is silently passing away childless!

Though the natives may be so far inaccessible to dogmatic teaching upon the mysteries of our faith, they can understand the comforting belief in a future of happiness. Thus, a female friend of ours was once talking with a lubra pensioner. She inquired after the health of William, the sick husband of the dark mendicant. "Him plenty bad—him tumble down soon" (die) was the sorrowful reply. A question was asked as to the future lot of departed aborigines. "Him go plenty long way—come up whitefellow," answered the lubra. Full of kindness toward the wandering, neglected ones, the good lady unfolded to the benighted creature the way of salvation. Rapt in attention, she listened to all, until she had heard that if she were good and her husband good she would meet him in happy heaven. Throwing up her arms, and with her eyes streaming with tears, she exclaimed, "Me see William again, oh! that plenty good—very good—me see William—me see William again." The Christianity of the affections has charms for even opossum-clad Australians.

DISEASES.

Upon the first visit of the whites, the natives of Port Phillip were found to be a healthy, happy race—excepting upon the Murray, where Sturt observed the dreaded plague for vice. Proximity to tribes acquainted with the older settlement of New South Wales may readily account for the appearance of the Europeans' blight upon that river. Alas! who is competent to describe the miseries following the introduction of that disease? Tribe after tribe disappear; men are enfeebled and degraded, seeking in drink a relief to their sufferings and self-upbraidings; women are debased, wretched, barren; and, as to the few children, Mr. Protector Thomas writes:—"I have known helpless infants brought into the world literally rotten with this disease."

Never shall we forget our sorrowful impressions at the spectacle of a Murray aborigine dying from this loathsome complaint. The poor creature was lying on the ground beneath a rough wirlie of reeds. Several women were crying piteously around him. One old man sat sulkily apart, as though brooding over the sorrows of his fallen race. The unhappy sufferer sought to excite our compassion by pointing to his sores. Then, closing his eyes with pain, he feebly uttered, "Me soon tumble down—me soon tumble down."

Mr. Protector Robinson, when visiting the new country to the north-west of the Glenelg river, in 1845, referring to this terrible evil, says:—"Prior to the occupying of this country by the whites, they were quite free from syphilitic disease; a remarkable circumstance, and a further proof of its European origin." The existence of this disease in the mission schools has tended to counteract all the moral agency of the teacher. It is a very remarkable fact, recorded by Dr. Livingstone, that this disease "dies out in the interior of Africa without the aid of medicine:" and that "the virulence of the secondary symptoms seemed to be in exact proportion to the greater or less amount of European blood in the patient." Would that it had been so in America, Polynesia, and Australia!

The introduction of drink among them has been the active agency of their physical as well as moral decline. What avails the Legislature passing enactments that the person who gave the liquor should be fined, or that the publican lose his license, when such a thing as conviction was hardly heard of? When a native is intoxicated, he lies down, it may be, upon some damp and exposed situation, with an inflamed body; the consequence is, that pulmonary complaints are engendered.

Digitized by Google

Doubtless, the practice of a partial civilisation induces much disease. A man dresses for a while in warm garments, partakes of our food, and sleeps in a comfortable hut; after a time he goes again into the bush with his blanket, his grubs, and his open mia-mia. A serious epidemic appears to have raged before Batman came, in 1835.

Diseases are regarded in some shadowy way to be connected with the ill-doings of divers fairies, brownies or the like. But these are vague and impressionless ideas; else we should see them, like others, supplicate the spirits whose malignity they feared. Yet they did talk of spirits creeping down trees at night, and stealing away their kidney fat. In all ages epidemics have been ascribed to the power of enchantments, exercised by some secret or avowed enemy. When Mr. Robinson was on the border some seventeen years ago, a plague was troubling the blacks, who entreated him to conciliate the neighbouring tribe, whose malignity had occasioned the visitation. Some diseases were believed to arise from an infringement of their laws respecting food: thus, the malformation of a child at birth (a very unusual occurrence) was supposed to be induced by the stars, or other unearthly beings, because the mother had eaten forbidden meat.

It is pleasing to record the devotion of natives to their sick relatives. We have been often interested in their delicate attentions, their soothing tones, their gentle solicitude, and their unmistakable anxiety. Though men are expected to bear pain like Spartans, the women give way to the wildest grief about them. They seek to assuage the sufferings of their friends by rubbing their own gums with cutting grass till they bleed profusely.

They have cures for many complaints which exhibit no small intelligence in the much despised aborigines. Rheumatisms are relieved by shampooing and lacerations; and inflammations by bleeding and by cold water applications; no female is bled. A sacred crystal was the instrument for the lancet among the Bakwains of Africa. A goat's horn serves for cupping. Wounds are covered with a plaster or poultice of mud and ashes, or in extreme cases are cauterised. Amputation is effected by ligatures; poisons from snakes are sucked out after the ligature has been applied above the wound; a vegetable diet is prescribed while under treatment. A medical gentleman once saw a man upon whom a tree had fallen; one arm was so crushed that he urged the sufferer to submit to amputation as the only means of saving his life. "Nebber mind," said the other, "blackfellow make him well by-and-bye." After several weeks' absence, the man returned with his arm recovered. It appeared that after receiving certain directions from the old men, he was conveyed into some quiet retreat by a stream, and assiduously tended by his wife and sister. Teatree bark bandages were applied to the arm, which were kept constantly moistened with cold water. Certain medicinal plants were prescribed; and the only food of which he was allowed to partake was the pounded root of the edible fern. Flesh wounds heal rapidly under their simple treatment. Dysentery is attacked by fomentations of the leaves of the native currant and other plants. Splints and bandages are employed in accidents. Venereal ulcers are sprinkled with alkaline wood ashes. For certain disorders the excrements of animals are rubbed over the head, and other more disgusting processes are employed for the body. Their doctors are old, experienced men, though not of the importance of the Indian medicine men. They have an odd fashion of relieving pain by sucking out from the part affected a piece of wood or bone, the cause of the suffering, and which is always exhibited to the patient; the charlatanism of some modern quacks is about as clumsy as this, but often equally efficacious upon believing minds. Sometimes it is called "taking out the grease." We were one day visiting a native camp with a friend, and fell in with a man lying down ill before a fire. Our companion jocosely told him to get his doctor to take out his grease for him. The other burst out laughing at this allusion to the old superstition of his tribe, and cried, "No, no; him no doctor." The incantations of these old men over the afflicted are, without doubt, of service to many, especially when accompanied by friction, owing to the mesmeric action induced. Some of their charming processes remind one strongly of those employed in ancient Greece; and marvels as great have been wrought by them as by the chants of the Thessalian maids. A description is given of the operation of the native physician upon an ague subject, which is interesting and suggestive. The woman was stripped of her blanket, and carried by two men to and fro over a fire. Then the doctor put a string round her waist, and holding the ends, gently pulled her toward him, repeating a charm. He then gazed earnestly in her face, catching her eye, still uttering a charm, to produce a magnetic influence. Going up to her, he began to employ friction on her body. Others came, and joined in the universal shampooing. Then catching her up, they rolled her in rugs, laid her before the fire, and left her to an undisturbed repose.

Digitized by Google

DEATH AND BURIAL.

We have, on more than one occasion, been present at the death of Australian aborigines. Mingled with natural and genuine sorrow, there was some of the artificial character, as in the hired mourners of the Jews, &c., and the black-craped concern of more modern days. We have witnessed a party of women thus sitting to mourn. With their heads shaven, like the American Indians, with pipe-clay on their faces, and a weighty mass of that material on their heads, they leaned over one another, and expressed their feelings in a low musical chant, in deep spasmodic sobs, and in abundant crying; the tears making their way through the plaster, produced a ludicrous appearance of the face. Unprovided with civilised handkerchiefs, the ladies would relieve their features from the effects of natural discharges at the weeping season, by appliances in the shape of sticks or stones. Now and then they would take breath, resume their cheerfulness, have a chat and laugh, then compose their countenance, wail once more, and fall to at tear-shedding. Occasionally the real sorrowers would throw hot ashes on their heads, scratch their faces, and cut themselves with flint or quartz. Women would apply a fire-stick to the fleshy parts of their arms and legs. The men would cut their beards, and put white paint upon their breasts. The camp was deserted upon a death. It is the practice never to allude, in any way, to the deceased one, nor mention his name. This has been foolishly set down to a want of feeling; it is rather a proof of deep feeling. We were present when a friend asked a woman after a certain person, not knowing that he was dead. The lubra laid her hand upon his arm, looked kindly in his face, and said in a plaintively reproachful tone, "Speak plenty low; no you say the like of that; blackfellow plenty growl." When instances are related of mothers carrying about with them the remains of some beloved child, we may be sure that the natural affections at this time of sorrow are in full exercise with them as with us.

A story is told of a strong, athletic, healthy woman, who suddenly received the news of her son being shot by the whites. Such was the effect of her bitter anguish that she soon became an aged-looking, bent, and wretched object. Pipe-clayed all over, she wandered about a hopeless and stricken one. She was often seen sitting apart from the tribe, weeping and moaning in sorrow.

It was this sympathy for the lost that gave origin to the custom of carrying about with them some memorial of the dead. The ashes of a corpse, a bone, or even, as in the case of an infant, the shrivelled mummied body, became thus the object of regard. A similar practice prevails among other nations. The widow among the Carrier Indians, we are told, thus bears about the ashes of her deceased husband for a certain time, at the expiration of which she piously places them in a box, and is considered free to accept of another husband. In Western Australia sometimes the beard of the deceased is cut off and burned, and the ashes rubbed upon the foreheads of surviving friends.

We were once at a native camp upon a Queen's birthday, at Adelaide, when the aborigines were favoured with new blankets, and regaled with "plenty tuck out." Noisy merriment was the order of the day. By-and-bye a woman came slowly into the camp, and addressed a few words to a party seated round the evening fire. Immediately great concern was expressed on the countenances of the group. There was no violent excitement, but the evidence of genuine, deep-seated grief. We quietly inquired the cause, and learned that tidings had arrived of the death of a relative. There sat this mourning group before us, a man and three women. The first, with his head upon his chest, exhibited but silent emotion. The others around him leaned toward him, weeping abundantly, and in a low, chanting tone seemed to be rehearsing their sorrows, or the virtues of their friend. A suspension of hilarity took place in the camp. Some came near and wept with the mourners. Others looked sad and sympathising, though never obtruding by officious words of comfort. In about half-an-hour the party separated, and the man lit his pipe and smoked in silence on the spot.

The forms of their burials varied according to circumstances and the tribe. When the ground was soft, the body was interred in a hole dug with sticks. Sometimes it was burnt, and the ashes preserved. Barrington said the early natives of Port Jackson buried the young, but burnt the bodies of the old and middle-aged. Captain Hunter writes, —"The dead they certainly burn." On the Lower Murray it was placed on a wooden stage, and exposed after the fashion of the Parsees of India and the Red Indians of Canada West. Some, again, thrust their relatives in a hollow tree or a wombat hole, or bind them among the branches. The Bakwains buried in huts for fear the Baloi or witches should disinter the corpse, to use some part of it in their diabolical arts. The Siah-Posh of India, a people like our blacks, expose their dead in a box on the top of a hill.

The Portland natives, according to Mr. Blair, used to strew leaves and brushwood

Digitized by Google

over their shallow graves. The western tribes placed branches and grass over the body to prevent the contact with soil. Mounds were often constructed. The Encounter Bay people sewed up the mouth and nose before interment, and burnt still-born children. On part of the Murray, the intestines were taken out and examined after death, when they were replaced with green leaves. The head was laid to the west, as among the Indians. The Gipps Land wild blackfellows are recorded to have often mutilated the corpse, burying the entrails, and preserving bony portions as relics. Some few bodies have been found thrown on the top of the Exocarpus, or native cherry tree. The Guiana Indians similarly expose the body, but only till the skeleton appears, when they collect the bones in a basket, and preserve them. On the contrary, their neighbours of the Rio Negro disinter the corpse after a month, burn it, and drink the ashes to receive the virtues of the deceased. Freycinet, in a plate of his work on New Holland, gives a march to a native funeral. Two men carry the body, wrapped up in bark and corded round; others, armed, precede or follow. The wife follows the corpse, naked and weeping.

We were present at the funeral obsequies of a Murray visitor on the banks of the Torrens. The body was placed in a sitting position, after the manner of the White Nile Blacks and of all the Indian tribes from Canada to Patagonia. The women remained to weep. The men, adorned with pipeclay, hurried their corpse to the sepulchre they had prepared. The tomb was not above four feet deep; branches of trees and old clothes were laid on the mound, and small fires made round about. A grand corrobory took place in the evening. Mr. Eyre speaks of the Murray tribes extracting the entrails, and filling their place with green leaves. Upon examination of the caul fat, the evil work of a sorcerer was known by the appearance of a scar. Many of their graves are bounded by well-cut trenches, after the fashion of the ancient Etruscans, to drain off the rain. Occasionally tents are constructed over the graves to preserve them from falling showers. We have seldom been so deeply interested as upon the occasion of a visit to the burial-place of a tribe allied to the Murray natives, but at a distance of forty miles from the banks of the river. There were eight or nine rude edifices of reeds and brushwood, eight or ten feet high, held together by several circuits of native twine. Under each dome were two or more grave mounds, covered with old rags, leaves, &c. There were walks between and around these mausoleums, which were kept clean by the tribe. Around the whole was an enclosure of sticks, plaited reeds, worn out garments, and string, to keep the cattle from intruding upon this cemetery. Mr. Hinkins relates a singular feature in the customs of the middle Murray tribes. A man had died while a number of his friends were absent on a hunting expedition. Upon their return, and hearing of the loss, they immediately attacked those who had remained behind, for no other reason than they had let the man die while they were away.

LANGUAGE.

Humboldt has declared that "Language is the outward appearance of the intellect of nations." If so, the philosopher would not be disposed to place the Australians low in the order of humanity. Their language is rich in material, good in analogy, and uniform in etymological structure. We pause not to inquire into the philological enigma; for, as says the "Encyclopedia Metropolitana:" — "The Goths, the Saxons, the Greeks, the Latins (and we would add, the Australians), in forming the schemes of conjugation, were probably impelled by principles in the human mind, the very existence of which they hardly suspected." Mr. ex-Protector Parker remarks upon the number and variety of combinations, "slight variations in the affixes expressed important differences of meaning." There are many dialects among our blacks. But this is readily explained by the unsocial nature of a hunter's life; his country is mapped out into detached territories for the sake of procuring a living, as among the American Indians, &c. In proportion to the consolidation of a people, so is the diminution of these dialects. Thus, in Timor there are forty; in savage Borneo, many hundreds; in Celebes, four; and in populous civilised Java, two dialects. Mr. ex-Protector Dredge wrote, in 1841: "Tribes separated from each other by comparatively limited spaces, scarcely retain the means of common conversational intercourse." Again, the custom of never repeating the name of a deceased friend, which may be the appellation of some common object, necessitates the creation of new forms of expression. Dobrizhoffer noticed the same thing among the Apibonians of South America, as he tells us:—"The word Nihirenak, a tiger, was exchanged for Apanigehak; Peu, a crocodile, for Kaeprhak; and Kaama, Spaniards, for Rikel;—because those words bore some resemblance to the names of Apibone lately deceased."

Mr. Moorhouse, the excellent Protector of Aborigines in South Australia, thus sums

Digitized by Google

up the points of grammatical similarity among the Australian dialects:—"They have suffixes, or particles, added to the terminal parts of words, to express relation; dual forms of substantives, adjectives and pronouns; limited terms, being only five, for time, distance, and number; no sibilant, or hissing sounds; no articles; no auxiliary verb; no relative pronoun; no prepositions; no distinctions in gender; no distinct form of the verb to express the passive voice."

The remarkable analogy of construction of language with such dissimilarity of words has struck many; the explanation, as afforded by the Rev. — Schurmann, German missionary among the Encounter Bay tribes, is so interesting that we give it entire:—"If we suppose," he says, "what appears to be very probable, that the scattered native tribes of this continent started from one point, and were originally one tribe, they would, of course, speak one language. As they spread over the face of the country they would naturally, in the course of time, more or less corrupt the pronunciation, and change the signification of many words; would forget old, and invent new terms for many things; till at last the most distant tribes seemed to speak almost radically different languages. Hundreds, and perhaps thousands of years, may have elapsed during that process; but no invasion, or amalgamation with a foreign nation, having taken place, consequently no fresh elements introduced into their social life; their minds retained the impression of the original stamp, they could not divest themselves of the forms of their mental intercourse inherited from their forefathers, or, which is the same thing, of the grammatical laws of their language. Hence the surprising uniformity and regularity of grammatical structure amidst a Babylonic confusion of dialects."

As an illustration of the difference, the Rev. Mr. Ridley gives Heb. iii. 4 in the native tongue. According to the Rev. W. Threlkeld, the Lake Macquarie tribe would say—"Yantin kokkere wittima taraito koreko: wontoba Noa yantin wittima Eloito Noa; or, Every house built some man;—whereas, He everything built: God is He." Mr. Ridley gives the Barwon; as—"Kanungo kundida gir giwirdi gimbilda: ngirma kanungo gimbilda gir Baiyame ngirma; or, Every house man some built; He everything built; God is He." In some dialects there are male nouns with corresponding female ones; as, Bandur, Bandurum; Barang, Barangan; Murri, Mata. With all their oddities, they had not, as in the Carib language, the same thing called uniformly one word by the men, and another by the women, literally constituting a double tongue. There is no want of words for expression in Australia; thus we have in Victoria, kowantenan, a toe; wyebotenan, a little toe; and barbuntenan, a big toe. Burmbo, new moon; bulgo, half-moon; tuandeboop, full moon. Yarra, or hair, means flowing,—thence applied to a river; yarra nunduk, flowing from the chin, is the beard; yarra montuberun, is a moustache; and yarra myng, the eyebrows.

In the philological work of the United States Exploring Expedition, there is a great deal of interesting matter collected. It was obtained by Mr. Horatio Hale chiefly from the Australian grammarian, Mr. Threlkeld. One singularity was observed in the interchangeable character of *a* and *u*, *e* and *i*, *o* and *u*. "In 300 words," says Mr. Hale, "of the Kamilarai, written down for the pronunciation of a native, the letter *o* is not once used, and the letter *e* but four times. On the other hand, in 200 words of the Wiradurei, while the *o* is found sixty-seven times, the *u* occurs but six; the *e* also is much more frequent than the *i*." A peculiar form of dual, in which the nominative and accusative are combined, is used sometimes in conjunction with the verb, forming compound dual pronouns; as, banum, I-thee; banoun, I-her; binun, thou-him; binoon, thou-her; biloa, he-thee; bintoa, she-thee.

There are odd arrangements in the verb of the Kamilarai, a dialect of New South Wales. There are seven conjugations, ending in—aligu, iligu, agigu, igigu, uygigu, angigu, ingigu. The very next tribe, on the contrary, have but four; ending in—aliko, kiliko, biliko, riliko. There are also fifteen tenses in the Kamilarai. Thus, of the Future, for instance, they have Proximate Future; as, bumalgiri, I shall soon strike; Instant Future; as, bumalawagiri, I shall immediately strike: Crastinal Future; as, bumalyariawagiri, I shall strike to-morrow; Future Preterite; as, bumegiri, I shall have struck. They have no especial form for the Passive. Verbal nouns are employed. In the West Australian language six tenses are particularised.

As an illustration of the remarkable diversity of tongues in Australia, we quote from Capt. King, the distinguished explorer of the coasts of New Holland during several years. That gentleman observes:—"In a comparative vocabulary of the languages of four different parts of the coast which I formed, the only one of forty words that is similar in all is that for the *eye*."

Almost all words end in vowels. There are five vowels, and sixteen consonants. There is a want of the *c*, *f*, *j*, *s*, *x*, or *z*. The nasal letter *ng* mostly begins syllables instead of ending, as in English. The *ng* is more common in the north than the south,

Digitized by Google

along with more consonantal sounds. Mr. Strutt speaks of a tribe having but two numerals; making compounds of these, thus —enea, one; petcheval, two; petchevalenea, three; petcheval petcheval, four, &c. The persons and cases of nouns are expressed by inflexions at the end, formed by combining the pronoun with the word. Thus, according to Mr. Parker, we have *Lar*, house; lar-knak, my house; lar-kneu, your house; lar-knook, his or her house; lar-knak-e, in my house; lar-ye-knak, at my house. The following from the Murray dialect, will show the declension of nouns: —

Nominative:
Meru, man.
Merakul, the two men.
Mera, men.

Active Nominative:
Merinnanna, man.

Genitive:
Merining, of man.
Merinnimakul.
Merinnarango.

Dative:
Merininnanno, to man.
Merinnakullamanno.
Merinnaramanno.

Accusative:
Meru, man.
Merakul.
Mera.

Ablative:
Merinni, with man.
Merinnakullamanno.
Merinnaramanno.
Merinnainmudl, from man.
Merinnakullamammudl.
Merinnaramainmudl.

The adjective is thus compared on the Victorian northern boundary: *worpippi*, great; *worpippinni*, greater. On the Yarra they add *un* for the comparative; and *unun* for the superlative. Tourlintablun, lazy, is tournurnenun, for very lazy. The verbs are inflected by the prefixed pronoun. Thus, *Ngape terrin*, I stand; *ngurru terrin*, thou standest; *ninni terrin*, he stands. The Chinese have similarly, *Nyo ngai*, I love; *ni ngai*, thou lovest; *ta ngai*, he loves. Among the Murray pronouns are —*Ngape*, I; *ngurru*, thou; *ngedlu*, we two; *ngupul*, you two; *ngennu*, we; *ngunnu*, you; *ninni*, he. Postfixes are employed for prepositions: thus, *Ityarnungko*, from; *taiapparnalityarnungko*, from lips. The conjunctions in Victoria are very few.

The union of pronoun and verb may be thus exhibited, the whole forming a curious grammatical combination :—

Singular.
Buntan bang.....I strike.
——— *bi* .....Thou strikest.
——— *noa* ....He strikes.
——— *bountoa*.....She strikes.
——— *ngali*.....This strikes.
——— *ngaloa* .....That strikes (near to)
——— *ngala* .....That strikes (spoken of).

Dual.
Buntan bali .....Thou and I strike.
——— *bali noa*.....He and I strike.
——— *bali bountoa*.She and I strike.
——— *bula* .....Ye two strike.
——— *bula buloara*.They two strike.

Plural.
Buntan nge eu .....We strike together.
——— *nura* .....Ye strike.
——— *bara* .....They strike.

The infinitive in Victoria ends always in *eit*. The possessives on the Yarra Yarra are thus made :—Murrumbeek, I; Murrumbeik, mine; Murrumbinner, you; Murrumbianner, yours; Murrumaner, we; Murrumbunarter, ours. Gaubo, one, becomes gauboden for once.

As further illustrations of the language of the Port Phillip blacks, we give the "Lord's Prayer" :—

Marmanella Marman wellainer narlunboon karboit; nerrino murrumbinner koongee boundup; woman trangbulk murrunbinner mongon tandowring beeker. Umarleek nurnin yellenwa tanganan; bar narlarnarny nurnin nowdin murrumarter narlarnarny ungo: bar kunark nurnin watticar koolin yellenwa nier nillana womeit."

Part of the first chapter of Genesis is thus rendered by a missionary :—

1 Gambronin Pundgyl Marman monguit woorworrer bar beek.
2 Nier beek nowdin netbo, beek tandowring tarkate; nier boit, nier mill, nier taul, nier turrong, nier uungo: bar boorundara kormku bumile. Bar Moorup Pundgyl warrebounk narlumbanan parn.
3 Bar Pundgyl Marman rombak, womear yangamut, bar yangamut woanan.
4 Bar Pundgyl Marman nangeit yangamut, bar tombak boundup nge, bar Pundgyl Marman borungnergurk yangamut boorundara.
5 Bar Pundgyl Marman nerreno yangamut yellenwo, bar boorundara borundut; bar krunguine bar baubaneram nerreno gaubronin yellenwa.
10 Bar Pundgyl Marman nerreno bidderup beek, bar wotonno paru nerreno warreenwarreen; bar Pundgyl nangeit kooding nge marnameek.

While *pundgyl* is spirit, the word *marman* or father is appended, to constitute the word for *God*. Mr. Thomas, who gives *pundgyl*

Digitized by Google

for God, allows *narroon* for spirit, *lambar-moor* for ghost, and *bullgenkarnee* for devil, or the ugly one.

The following is a hymn sung at the Merri Creek School to the tune of the "Old Hundredth :"—

Pundgyl Marman, bar mar-na-meek
Nun-guk kub-ber-don mur-rum-beek
Mong-der-re-wat koo-lin net-bo
Tan-dow-ring koon-gee mur-rum-bo.

Mal-yeng-erk par-do-gur-ra-bun
Tu-duk yar-rite ko-dun-un-un
Ner-rem-bee bo-run, yel-len-wa
Nul-wor-then bo-pup Koo-lin-ner.

Ner-doit ye-men-ner mur-rum-beek
Lack-boo-ding myng-ner kar-gee-ick
Bar ner-doit yan-na-ner war-reet
Kar-gee nger-ren-er mur-rum-beek.

ORIGIN OF OUR NATIVES.

Consulting with Simon, the son of Jagga Jagga, the friend of Batman, upon this abstruse subject, we obtained the following opinion:—"Blackfellow always this country. No like whitefellow, walk plenty, go new country." Mr. Moorhouse, of Adelaide, like the Rev. Mr. Schürmann, has a philological theory of their origin. Observing the singular uniformity of terms in various dialects for the two first persons, he supposes a party landing in North Australia, and separating in pairs. But it is very remarkable that while the tribes of North and South Australia practise circumcision, those of Victoria, Western Australia, and New South Wales are ignorant of the rite.

The uniformity as well as singularity of structure of language, inclines us to apply the words of Professor Vater, of Leipzig, when showing the unity of the tongues of the American Indians :—"Such unity, such direction or tendency, compels us to place the origin in a remote period, when one original tribe or people existed, whose ingenuity and judgment enabled them to excogitate or invent such intricate formations of language as could not be effaced by thousands of years, nor by the influence of zones or climates." The language of the Australians is said to be most nearly identified with that of the nomadic Tartars, while others connect it with the Sanscrit. There is, at any rate, sufficient to show that our race are not a separate creation, as some will have it. Dr. Thomas Young asserts that if three words coincide in two different languages, their identity of relation is ten to one ; that "six words would give 1700 to one ; and eight near 100,000." Humboldt discovered 170 words in common between the old and new continents.

Although our people were not quite like the first men of Æschylus,

——— having eyes to see they saw not.

Yet we dare affirm some likeness in other respects :—

Like dreamy phantoms,
A random life they led from year to year,
All blindly floundering on. No craft they knew,—
No sign they knew to mark the wintry year;
The flower strewn spring, and the fruit-laden summer,
Uncalendared, unregistered, returned.

One of their own traditions of origin is thus stated. In the primeval times the earth existed in darkness, with birds and beasts upon it. Once upon a time a dispute arose between two birds, the emu and the native companion ; when the latter, in indignation at the other's abuse, seized one of her eggs, and threw it into the air a considerable distance. The egg broke, and out burst the sun. Directly the world became illumined, a number of the lower animals were suddenly converted into men and women. But this may be no more true than the legend which accounts for the early settlement of Ireland ; namely, that three men and fifty-three women, not being able to get into the ark, built a ship at the instigation of the devil, and were directed by that personage in safety to Bantry Bay.

The Polish traveller among them writes : "Their origin is involved in impenetrable obscurity ; and such others as have attempted to trace their migrations, or to detect the links which connect them with any of the predominant and primitive races of mankind, have not succeeded more satisfactorily than a naturalist would, who might attempt to account for the existence of the marsupials and the ornithorhynchus in Terra Australis." Dr. Ross goes so far as to say : "At no former period have we the slightest reason to believe that they ever existed in a superior state of society." As Dr. Livingstone regards the Bushmen as the only real nomades of Africa, so would we esteem our aborigines as the early as well as the later nomades of the further East.

The question is asked, has Australia no monuments of the past, as the Cyclopean walls of Europe, the cave homes of Asia, or the rude temples of America ? We reply, there are a few, a very few. but just sufficient to indicate either their former connection with some sort of civilisation, or else that another race had visited if not dwelt among them at a remote period, and been long since utterly extirpated. Mystic circles have been noticed on the tops of hills, and some of stones, after the Druidical fashion. Captain Hunter saw a mound in 1789, which he thus describes :—"It was quite rocky on the top ; the stones were all standing perpendicularly

Digitized by Google

on their ends, were in long but narrow pieces; some of them three, four, or five sides, in miniature resembling the Giant's Causeway."

Certain caves have been discovered in various parts of the coast, on the walls of which remarkable figures are drawn. Flinders, King, and Grey saw these in various parts of North Australia. At Ryalstone, New South Wales, forty miles from Mudgee, is a cave with the bottom paved. Among other impressions are those of a number of red hands; some with the forefinger cut off, others crossing one another. In one cave, Grey, in 15° S. lat., found figures with red garments down to the ankles, and a sort of glory round their heads. Others have coloured bandages round their heads. Some women, also, are depicted with eyes, but no mouths; one has a blue head-dress. Among the buildings of ancient Egypt and India, and the monuments of the ancient Peruvians and Mexicans, the red cap and red hand are common, and evidently refer to some universally spread mystery—some lost freemasonry. With these sketches are those of kangaroos, snakes, fish, &c. At Cape Schank, Western Port, at York, Western Australia, at the coast by Newcastle and Port Jackson, and at Cape Bridgewater, west of Portland, similar caves of ochre drawings are to be seen. To all inquiries the native has the same answer:—"Blackfellow make it plenty long while ago before whitefellow come." But such observations led Mr. Miles, of Sydney, to say:—"The races of Australia have been in communication with the most early races."

There is no record of a people raising themselves from barbarism; but isolation, and removal from civilising agencies, will soon reduce a community to a low condition of mind. Dr. Beke informs us that, "The culture or degradation of our aboriginal race will be in proportion to the geographical distance of its residence from the common centre of its dispersion." If so, our dark friends must have come a long way from home. The boomerang discovered in the tombs of ancient Egypt forms almost the only link connecting them with the civilisation of the world.

We will now bring forward some statements about the neighbours of the Australians, to show the relation between them.

It may be premised that there are two dark races in the Indian Seas, north of New Holland, one of whom is but a mixed race of Malays and the aboriginal inhabitants. The reader of Mr. Crawfurd's learned work upon the Indian Archipelago will gain much valuable information upon these people. It is more than probable that this primitive people extended eastward and westward, far beyond their present limits, even across the Pacific islands. Mr. Williams, the missionary, thus put the matter:—"The hypothesis I would venture to suggest is, that the negro race inhabited the whole of the islands prior to the arrival of the Malay Polynesians; that the latter being a fierce and treacherous people, succeeded in conquering and extirpating them from the smaller islands and groups, but were unable to effect this in the larger ones." He adds, "The origin of this nation is involved in much mystery." In New Zealand, in spite of the mixture of tribes, there is still an inferior and a darker race, according to Dieffenbach, an aboriginal people, who were held more or less in a state of slavery.

It has been the custom for travellers to dilate upon the deformities and repulsive aspect of those aborigines, forgetting the maxim of Buffon, "All those people who live miserably are ugly;" as was found to be the case formerly with the half-starved creatures of Galway and the Hebrides. When provided with sufficient food, and unmolested by the presence of a superior and bloodthirsty race, they are not seen to be the physically degraded beings thus caricatured. But we will now give the reports of travellers upon this singular, ancient and widely distributed race.

M. Lesson, when in New Guinea, fell in with the Endamenes, the Alforians, or true blacks of the interior. "They live," says he, "in the most miserable manner. The Papuas described them to us as of ferocious character, cruel and gloomy; possessed of no arts, and passing their whole lives in seeking subsistence in the forests. Those whom we saw had a repulsive physiognomy; flat noses, cheek bones projecting, large eyes, prominent teeth, long and slender legs, very black and thick hair, rough and shining without being woolly; their beards were very coarse and thick. An excessive stupidity was stamped upon their countenances, probably the effect of slavery. These savages, whose skin is of a very deep dirty brown, or black colour, go naked; they make incisions upon their arms and breasts, and wear in their noses pieces of wood nearly six inches long." The black race of the mountains of Indo-China, although surrounded by idolatrous nations, have no idea of God or religion, any more than the Australians. It is the same with the wild men of the woods of Malaya. In Darnley Isle of Torres Straits, the men were seen with scars on their shoulders, the septum of their nose bored, and going quite naked. The women often shaved their heads, as their sisters of New Holland. The Arru Islanders mistook some Australians for natives of the more inaccessible parts of their own country.

The Semang of Malacca have curly, matted

Digitized by Google

hair, thick lips, flat noses, and black skins. The live in rude, moveable huts of leaves and branches, and are fed from the chase. The Ombay are a black cannibal race, with flat noses and thick lips, in the interior of Timor. Mr. Earl talks of the Orang-Benna, of Borneo, as "the tribes which reside in the depths of the forests." These wild men of that island are said by some to live in the trees, not to cultivate the ground, and to be incapable of being reduced to slavery. The Malays have only one method of retaining them in their service: they cut off a foot, and fix the stump in a bamboo stick, so as to hinder their running away to the woods again. Latham thus describes the Protonesian branch of the Kelænonesian blacks:—They are always found in the interior or more impracticable parts, and always as an inferior population. From this we infer that they are the older occupants." He elsewhere refers to their isolation as of far earlier date than their neighbours.

The same kind of people still dwell among the fastnesses of the Phillippine Islands. Many of them are in Isla de los Negros. The Abbate Bernardo de la Fuente is our authority upon these Aigta or Blacks. "The said race of negroes," writes the good priest, "seem to bear upon themselves the malediction of heaven, for they live in the woods and mountains like beasts, in separate families, and wander about, supporting themselves by the fruits which the earth spontaneously offers to them; it has not come to my knowledge that a family of true negroes ever took up their abode in a village. If the Mahometan inhabitants (Malays) make slaves of them, they will rather submit to be beaten to death than undergo any bodily fatigue; and it is impossible by force or persuasion to bring them to labour. I have ever maintained with these negroes a gentle and friendly intercourse, hoping that the grace of the Lord might fructify in their hearts." Would that all had imitated the conduct of the kind-hearted padre! But his very want of success as a missionary among them, in contrast with the ordinary Phillippine islanders, strikingly reminds us of the Protestant enterprise among the Polynesians of the South Seas, being unlike the mission failure among the poor Australians and Tasmanians.

Another writer thus characterises these Negritos: "The creatures seemed to be a large kind of monkey rather than human beings." They have large bellies, lank extremities, but brilliant eyes. They wear a piece of the rind of a tree around their waists, when clothed at all. They congregate in small tribes, live by the chase, and sleep around the fire. They revenge the natural death of friends by the slaughter of the first person of another tribe. They have no religion. The girl, when sought in marriage, flies to the forest: if found by the lover, she accepts of his protection." There is a similar race in Tasso.

After these statements, we are the more impressed with the sentiments of the learned Sir Stamford Raffles: "Whatever opinion may be formed as to the identity of origin between the natives inhabiting these islands and the neighbouring peninsula, the striking resemblance in person, features, language, and customs which prevails throughout the whole archipelago, justifies the conclusion that the original inhabitants issued from the same sources, and that the peculiarities into which it is at present distributed are the result of long separation, local circumstances, and foreign intercourse."

One certain bond of brotherhood thus exists among the dark races of Australia and the Indian Seas; but whence they originally sprang, and what circumstances have arisen to render them thus scattered over thousands of miles, through seventy degrees of latitude, almost wholly divested of any association with other races, is one of the many mysteries of the animal economy which modern philosophy has not penetrated, and the lost keys to which no time nor research may be able to recover.

How can we reconcile these things?

It may appear that this opens up the great question of the Origin of Man. But without entering upon that important inquiry, we are constrained to admit that the generally received chronology of six thousand years since the creation of man, or four thousand since a deluge destroyed all but one family, can be no longer maintained. As a very extended period is granted for the formation of the crust of the earth,—even millions of years for strata of the most modern date,—we must be willing to extend our ideas of time, with regard to the existence of human beings here. As Christian men see no danger to the real authority of scripture and the stability of religion now in believing the one, so will they eventually cease to be alarmed in receiving the other statement.

No geologist doubts the high antiquity of certain rocks in which the bones of man have been found. There is good evidence of the Indians of North America having been there as a *building* people for several thousand years. The borings of the Nile bed reveal a condition of rude civilisation in a land that we know to have flourished with a refined and learned people for five or seven thousand years. The gravel of north-eastern France, the loess of the Rhine, the clay of South England, each bear witness to man living along with the elephant, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus in northern Europe. Beneath

Digitized by Google

the streets of Glasgow have been disinterred the rude canoe of the aborigines, who fished in the waters there. In the valley near Stirling, at the depth of many feet below the surface, have been discovered the skeletons of whales and the works of man together. The human remains of Scotland alone bear testimony to an antiquity of many thousands of years.

The walls of Egypt declare that the various distinctions of colour and feature, appertaining to the African and Asiatic races now, were known at least four thousand years ago. Sir Charles Lyell may then well exclaim :—"If the various races were all descended from a single pair, we must allow for a vast series of antecedent ages, in the course of which the long continued influence of external circumstances gave rise to peculiarities, increased in many successive generations, and at length fixed by hereditary transmission."

Assuming, therefore, the correctness of the theory giving so extended a period to the history of man, we are able more easily to account for the striking similarity of the true aborigines of the Asiatic continent and islands to our Australians.

We have but to suppose that in the long lapse of ages past there was no sea dividing New Guinea and Sumatra from New Holland, and none separating those islands from the Indies, within and without the Ganges. At that epoch of the world's history, the dark Papuan race existed alone in that quarter. Slowly did certain low lands become covered with the advancing waters. As part sank to be the bed of the ocean again, the higher lands alone would remain, in isolated portions, the home of the human inhabitants. Successive elevations and depressions gave the present physical aspect of the south eastern hemisphere, and left the ancient dark-skinned people separated as we find them.

It is an interesting speculation to consider how far our black friends are like those aboriginal inhabitants of Northern Europe, who now and then get unearthed from amidst their cotemporaries, the hyena, bear, wild ox, elephant, hippopotamus, &c.

Two of the most ancient skulls yet found are those of the Engis and Neanderthal, so called from the places from which they were taken. The Neanderthal is the lowest type yet discovered, being no great remove from the ape family, according to Professor Huxley. That from the cave of Engis, though quite as ancient, and, perhaps, many thousands of years old, has an aspect that will bear comparison with many skulls now. Two small Australian skulls were examined with them. The Engis showed a longitudinal extreme of $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches, with a transverse of $5\frac{1}{4}$. The Neanderthal was 8 for the one, and $5\frac{3}{4}$ for the other. The Australian skulls were respectively, $7_{1}^{0}{}_{0}$ and $5\frac{3}{4}$, $7\frac{1}{4}$ and $5\frac{3}{4}$. The longitudinal arc, from the nose backward, of the Neanderthal was only 12 inches; that of the Engis $13\frac{3}{4}$; those of the Australians came between these two measurements. An average English skull is $13\frac{3}{4}$ longitudinal arc, $7\frac{1}{2}$ longitudinal extreme, and $5\frac{1}{3}$ transverse.

It is remarkable that their incisors have the same inclination to be round, as is observed in the teeth of the extinct Guanches of the Canaries, and the extinct race of ancient Scotland.

How long, then, the Australians have dwelt beneath the shade of the gum trees, and plucked the curious fruit of the cherry-tree, we have no means of determining. It is enough for us to know that they were here long before Abraham went down into Egypt, or the most ancient walls of Nineveh or Thebes were raised. The first of our philosophical geologists ventures to speak of the "complete isolation for *tens of thousands of centuries* of tribes in a primitive state of barbarism." The Norman families of England must yield, in their pride, the palm to our *sans culotte* neighbours of Australia; and even the ancient lineage of Israel sinks into a modern date indeed before the hoary age of the dark sons of the forest here.

Whence came the race? Long lost to all
The rest of human kind.
They lived secluded savages,
To art and progress blind.

E'en the productions of their land,
So different appear,
That wise heads have declared, it once
Fell from the moon down here!

The platypus, a quadruped:
Egg-laying, with duck's bill;
While creatures elsewhere fossil-known,
Our seas and forests fill.

The flora puzzled botanists—
Such odd forms met their eye:
When cherries carried stones outside,
And grass-stems flowered high.

It cannot then surprise us more,
The men should curious be;
True aborigines they are,
Of dark antiquity.

CONFLICTS OF WHITES AND BLACKS.

With their jealousy at the least intrusion upon their hunting grounds by a neighbouring tribe, we cannot believe the Port Phillip blacks, any more than those of other parts of Australia, regarded our coming with complacency, and the occupation of their country by our flocks with satisfaction. The truth

Digitized by Google

is, their conduct towards us in our weakness was most generous and praiseworthy. And, although isolated instances of ruthless attack occurred at an early period, with no obviously apparent causes for such, yet we should be cautious in condemning a people with whose language and motives we were then so ignorant, particularly with the knowledge of highly exciting reasons of complaint on other occasions. Mr. Eyre, late Lieutenant-Governor of New Zealand, and an able authority upon any question respecting the aborigines of New Holland, has well observed: "Our being in their country at all is, so far as their ideas of right and wrong are concerned, altogether an act of intrusion and aggression."

Warning was given at an early date by Mr. Hoddle, first surveyor of Melbourne, of the consequences to the blacks of our settlement of the new country of Port Phillip. In a small pamphlet, he said;—"As the country becomes occupied by whites the race will become extinct, unless better steps be adopted for their preservation." Temptations were undoubtedly held out to the natives, when large flocks of from one to two thousand were left in charge of a solitary, infirm, or old shepherd in a rough country.

When difficulties did come, and complaints of the outrages of the blacks reached England, a despatch of Lord John Russell's, in 1839, contains this remarkable passage: "It is impossible that the Government should forget that the original aggression was our own; and that we have never yet performed the sacred duty of making any systematic or considerable attempt to impart to the former occupants of New South Wales the blessings of Christianity, or the knowledge of the arts and advantages of civilised life."

The conflicts between the whites and blacks of Port Phillip have not been so bloody and constant as in the neighbouring colony of Tasmania. Our natives were a gentler race than the curly-headed Islanders. Still, a sad tale is to be told of aggressions and murders in the olden times. If the settlers can tell of stolen sheep and slaughtered shepherds, the natives can also rehearse a tale of seduction and murder. Mr. Protector Robinson assures us that "nine-tenths of the mischief charged to the aborigines is the result of the white man's interference with the native women." The first murder by the aborigines of Port Phillip had its origin in this cause,—interference with their females. Two shepherds belonging to the Port Phillip Association had been sent down in the early part of 1836 to Mr. Batman's first station on Indented Head. They were murdered upon their return. One of them had been wounded by the natives of Van Diemen's Land, and bore a deadly hatred against all blacks. Another shepherd about this time bound a native girl to a tree, to secure her while he was away with his flock. Contriving to escape, the poor thing fled to Buckley for protection. He told Mr. Gellibrand, who immediately sent the rough rascal back to Van Diemen's Land.

The next attack was an unaccountable one. Mr. Franks, formerly of Green Ponds, in Tasmania, had settled near Mr. Cotterill. Always kind to the aborigines, he had no fear of aggression. Some callers at the homestead discovered the gentleman and James Smith, his overseer, lying quite dead, and the premises rifled of their contents. According to Mr. Connell, four gentlemen accompanied Mr. Gellibrand to ascertain the truth of the report. The remains of the men were brought to town and interred on Burial Hill, the little inclosure near the Flagstaff. An organised party under Dr. Cotter, with Billiang and some of Batman's Sydney natives, set off in hostile pursuit. They soon came on to the track of the murderers. They approached a place where a lubra's grub stick was picked up and recognised. The end of the story will be best told in the words of Old Goslyn, the octogenarian: "They let fly at them, killed a great many, and what was not killed and wounded ran away, leaving all behind them; a dray was loaded with what they had carried away, and their spears and waddies and tomahawks."

Mr. M'Killop, writing from the New Settlement, Yarra Yarra, June 20th, 1836, gives a version of the murder, and adds:—"Since then I have heard from thence that ample justice has been visited on the tribe who murdered Mr. Franks. His clothes, blankets, guns, flour, &c., were found in their possession, and no mercy was shown them by the tribe that was sent from the New Settlement to do the needful." A somewhat similar chase took place after a sheep-stealing party near the Victoria ranges, with the help of friendly natives—of which the paper of the day states, "It was not until some hard scuffling had taken place, and a considerable number of the blacks were killed and wounded, that the marauders beat a retreat." Our Black police were horrible instruments of colonial law. Above fifty of one tribe, the Gipps Land, were coolly murdered by them in their search for a supposed white female captive.

The natives were not without their tales of wrongs. The following quotation from the Sydney *Government Gazette*, confirms this statement:—"Whereas, it has come to the knowledge of the Government, that on the

Digitized by Google

night of the 23rd of February last, a party of six or more armed Europeans surprised a number of aboriginal natives, sleeping in a tea-tree scrub, in the immediate vicinity of the station of Messrs. Smith and Orsbry, in the Portland Bay district; and then and there barbarously murdered three aboriginal females and one male child, by gun or pistol shots, besides wounding a fourth female. It is hereby notified," &c. Many of the stock-keepers and shepherds were from Van Diemen's Land, and had, in many cases, shed the blood of the poor Tasmanians. They were not indisposed to regard the shooting of all blackfellows as pleasant and proper sport. The late Protector, Mr. Dredge, thus records an atrocity:—"To one has been given the carcase of a dead lamb, which he forthwith proceeds to roast for himself and his two lubras; while the operation is going on, he seats himself by the fire with one of his women, while the donor sits opposite with the musket in his hand; in an unsuspecting moment he shoots the black man, and with the butt end of his piece knocks out the brains of the woman and the helpless infant at her breast. The other woman, gathering firewood at a little distance, escapes by flight. The bodies of the others are then burnt to prevent detection." According to Mr. Parker, in July, 1838, Mr. Bowman's party of the Pyrenees were said to have killed fourteen persons. Bowman's servants were tried for burning the bodies of the slain, to conceal their cruelty; they were acquitted for want of white evidence.

We give the following story upon the authority of the Rev. Mr. Threlkeld, many years a missionary in New South Wales:—"A native was taken by a party of whites and made to ascend a tree with a rope round his neck: this he was directed to fasten to one of the limbs of the tree. When he had done this he was fired at again and again; he was wounded and clung to the tree. A volley was then fired at him; he let go his hold, and was suspended as a terror to others. Was it surprising when they were tortured by such acts of cruelty if they became apt scholars?" The same gentleman adds:—"I have been informed that a petition has been presented to the Governor containing a list of nineteen murders committed by the blacks. I would, if it were necessary, make out a list of 500 blacks who had been slaughtered by the whites, and that within a short time. It was known to many there that a party of stockmen went in search of the blacks to the northward, and having found them ripped up a number of men and women, and dashed out the brains of the children."

In 1842, the Government at Melbourne offered a reward of £50 for the discovery of the white murderer of three native women while asleep, at Portland Bay. Not a few instances are authenticated in which poison has been laid for them, as though they had been vermin. The sawyers and splitters of the bush have been known to decoy women to their huts, keep them awhile, and then destroy them. Commandoes would be got up by them on some Sunday holiday for the perpetration of a threat of vengeance, and from lustful cravings.

Several convicts were executed some years ago at Sydney for a frightful raid against a tribe, when they butchered parents and children together. With others it was like that described by Barrington of the Boers: "Firing small shot into the legs and thighs of a Hottentot is a punishment not unknown to some of these monsters." Well might the South Australian Commissioners declare of such Englishmen that "they dealt with the aborigines as if they regarded them not as members of the human family, but as inferior animals, and created for their use." Several cases of cruelty are given in the author's work on "Western Victoria."

Robberies of sheep were common enough in remote districts. The natives doubtless believed that they had a right to a few of the white man's woolly kangaroo that fed on their pastures and destroyed their roots. A favourite place of retreat on these forays was the celebrated basaltic Stony Rises. The dogs of the natives were destructive to the flocks. Dr. Thomson acted wisely when he went to Geelong harbour in 1837. He got Buckley to gather the tribe to receive beef and blankets, and explain his intention to act well to them, if they would do so to him. The result was, that he never suffered molestation or loss. It was far different elsewhere. The settlers were in constant and harassing fear. The lordly and luxurious squatters of the present day endured years of privation, anxiety, and suffering to maintain their ground, and open up a country to succeeding generations. Whole flocks were carried off, out-stations robbed of stores, shepherds speared, and servants so frightened as to be unable to discharge their duties. The squatters in their meetings condemned the Protectorate, and recommended the establishment of land reserves and provision depôts for the blacks, and the formation of missions among them. The Government was feeble and distant, and gazette proclamations were ill-supported by police arrangements, for protection either of blacks or whites.

For a time in the bush, in some disturbed districts especially, a state of things existed in Port Phillip, which forcibly reminds one of the early days of Connecticut, thus de-

Digitized by Google

scribed by the historian, Forest :—"This war reduced the few and scattered settlers to great distress. They could neither hunt, nor fowl, nor fish, but in fear; nor could they go safely out to work in the fields, without burdening themselves with instruments of defence. No woman felt certain, when her husband left her in the morning, that she should not, before the sun went down, see his lifeless corpse brought home, hacked by the Indian tomahawks."

The sheep difficulty was no common one in that time, when the aborigines were the many, and had contracted a decided taste for the "woolly kangaroo." The gun was without doubt used pretty freely. The Port Phillip *Herald* of May, 1840, has this sentence :—"Many conscientious men would give 100 sheep to save the life of a fellow creature; but if that fellow-creature came with the purpose of forcibly taking away 100 sheep, it quite alters the case."

Mr. Robinson was sent up to the Borders in 1845, about reported murders and sheep stealing there. He found much fault with the treatment the natives received from some squatters. He was pleased with the experience given him by the superintendent of one of the outposts of the colony, and thus mentions it in his report :—"He had been so completely harassed with frequent watchings and fatigue in riding to the different out-stations, that, had the previous state of things continued, he must have resigned his situation. Since he had had them in, they had been at peace. At one time they could not walk out unless armed, sheep were constantly stolen, and they were in danger of being speared. He principally fed the natives on old sheep, occasionally a few others, and probably they might steal two or three from the fold; but what was that, he said, to having four shepherds killed, and whole flocks taken away." The advantage of conciliation measures was thus substantiated.

A strong tribe near Terang, of Port Phillip, had given considerable trouble and anxiety to the lonely settler of that beautiful and volcanic district. Arming his men, as he told us, he tracked the natives to a dense reedy thicket of the Pejark Marsh, which he did not think proper to enter. Determining to try moral means before recourse to more violent ones, he went ahead of his servants, approached the edge of the scrub, and cooey-ed for the hidden ones. Suspecting the reason of none appearing, he went back to lay down his musket. Again walking forward, and calling, he was responded to by the stealthy step of one or two of the most venturesome, who were full of confidence toward so brave a man. The gentleman was able to make them understand that he would do them no harm, but much wished they would leave his part of the country. His daring and kindness were rewarded. The blacks came out of their stronghold, and quietly and altogether abandoned the place.

Many dreadful atrocities might be detailed of our aborigines in the olden times. The blacks on the Lower Murray, the Coorong, and Lake Victoria were often at war with us. The overlanders with stock were more than once waylaid by them, their sheep or cattle driven away, and white blood shed in the struggle. A party of 600 thus set upon eleven armed colonists conducting 5000 sheep across the Murray. A strong force of seventy-four men was despatched from Adelaide to punish the thieves. Like the King of France with 40,000 men, they went and returned, killing none, and taking none prisoners. Mr. Langhorne's overland party of sixteen had four killed and two wounded. Major O'Halloran came upon thirteen natives, who briskly took to the river and escaped. That officer wrote:—"They might all with certainty have been shot; but when they found we would not fire, the villains laughed, and mocked us, roaring out, 'Plenty sheepy.'"

A lamentable tale could be told of the murder of the crew and passengers of the brig *Maria*, wrecked in Encounter Bay. They attempted a ninety-mile walk to the mouth of the Murray, and were successively slaughtered in parties as they approached. The bloody clothes of children were afterwards found on the bushes of the coast. To this dangerous locality Mr. Eyre, afterwards the celebrated explorer, and a Governor in New Zealand, was appointed resident magistrate. After that we hear of no more outrages by that people. The experience of that gentleman is thus strongly expressed :—

"I believe," says Mr. Eyre, "were Europeans placed under the same circumstances, equally wronged, and equally shut out from redress, they would not exhibit half the moderation and forbearance that the poor untutored children of impulse have invariably shown. It is true that occasionally many crimes have been committed by them, and robberies and murders have too often occurred; but who can tell what were the provocations which led to, what the feeling which impelled such deeds? Neither have they been the only nor the first aggressors, nor have their race escaped unscathed in the contest. Could blood answer blood, perhaps for every drop of Europeans' shed by natives, a torrent of theirs, by European hands, would crimson the earth."

Digitized by Google

NATIVE RIGHTS AND BRITISH RULE.

The aborigines were held by our Government to have no proprietorship in the soil; and yet, Mr. Eyre writes, "Each male has some portion of land of which he can point out the boundaries. A female never inherits." Governor Gawler, speaking of the land, says, "Over which these aborigines have exercised distinct, defined and absolute right of proprietary and hereditary possession." Mr. Protector Parker asserts, "Every family had its own locality." Dr. Thomson told the Sydney Council, that the native "considers the land as his own; indeed every family had its separate portion.

Dr. Lang, in a letter to the benevolent Dr. Hodgkin, of London, says: "I have often heard natives myself tell me, in answer to my own questions upon the subject, who were the aboriginal owners of particular tracts of country, now held by Europeans; and, indeed, this idea of *property in the soil*, for hunting purposes, is universal among the aborigines." Again he writes, "The infinity of native names of places, all of which are descriptive and appropriate, is of itself a *prima facie* evidence of their having strong ideas of property in the soil." A colonial historian, sixty years ago, declared that the natives had hereditary property; and spoke of Goat Island, Port Jackson, belonging to the father of Bennilong, the first half-civilised blackfellow.

Though the English Government recognised the rights of the New Zealanders in the land question, they thought it unnecessary to regard those of our nomadic Australians, unless it be that certain lands were kept from public sale, and were denominated "native reserves." It is satisfactory, however, to observe, that when South Australia was established as a colony by a private company in London, the principle of justice was fully recognised. The declaration of the Commissioners is most explicit on this head. In referring to the formation of a fund for the future sustenance of the natives, they thus propound their scheme: "It is proposed that such lands as may be *ceded* by the natives to the Colonisation Commissioners, shall be sold under the condition—that for every eighty acres conveyed, the party to whom this conveyance is made shall pay four-fifths, or sixty-four (64) acres only; the conveyance to be made subject to a stipulation, that at the expiration of a term of years (hereafter to be decided), the lands so conveyed shall be divided into five equal parts. One of these parts, or sixteen (16) acres, to be resumed for a reserve for the use of the aborigines: and the remaining four parts, or sixty-four (64) acres, to remain as his freehold." The use of these sixteen acres was thus retained for no payment, and the increased value of the land would then provide a handsome fund for the aborigines. "Thus conducted," add the Commissioners, "the colonisation of South Australia will be an advent of mercy to the native tribes.

But this was too fair a vision to be realised. The colonists got the land on these conditions, but retained the said sixteen acres; while the worthy Commissioners forgot to enforce their own regulations. But all were not oblivious of duty. A gentleman, one of that noble body, the Society of Friends, wrote to the Adelaide paper, on the seventh of *ninth month*, 1838, stated that he had paid in to the Government the sum of £3 16s. 6d., being interest at the rate of ten per cent. upon this aforesaid one-fifth portion of his land, and had desired that that amount be devoted to the benefit of the aborigines. He says, "I beg leave to pay the above sum for that purpose, seeing the Commissioners, as yet, have neither fulfilled their pledge in this respect to the public, or carried out the moral principle signified." The simple-hearted, honest man concludes: "I disclaim this to be either donation, gift, or grant, but a just claim the natives have on me as an occupier of those lands." Would that such honourable sentiments were more generally cherished!

The anomalous condition of the blacks under our rule is thus described by Count Strzelecki: "The late act declaring them naturalised as British subjects has not only rendered them legally amenable to the English criminal law, but added one more anomaly to all the other enactments affecting them. This naturalisation excludes them from sitting on a jury, or appearing as witnesses, and entails a most confused form of judicial proceedings; all which taken together, has made of the aborigines of Australia a nondescript caste, who, to use their own phraseology, are neither white nor black." The New South Wales Legislature passed a law in 1839 to admit native evidence, but this was disallowed by the home authorities; in 1844 the Council were opposed to the admission. Mr. Protector Robinson has properly observed, "The legal disabilities of the aborigines have been a serious obstacle to their protection and civilisation."

The report of the Aborigines Society of London declares, "The ends of justice, when injuries inflicted upon the natives are brought into court, are almost inevitably defeated." Governor Grey, of South Australia, a true friend of the dark coloured race, in one of his despatches to Downing-street, writes: "The ordinance which admits native information and evidence without the sanction of

Digitized by Google

an oath has long been felt to be necessary, and confers a first and important boon to the native population." Such an act was passed by his means, in Adelaide, in 1844. The desire for something to be done was illustrated in the interesting address of the House of Commons to the King in 1835, praying "That measures be taken to secure to the natives of the several colonies the due observance of justice and the preservation of their rights;" "to promote among them the spread of civilisation, and the peaceful and voluntary reception of the Christian religion."

If difficulties were experienced in treating upon questions of dispute between the aborigines and the colonists, they assumed another shape when the cases at issue were between the blacks themselves. As British subjects they were subject to British laws in relation to their conduct toward each other, although such cases were totally unknown and unknowable to them, and in many cases wholly opposed to their own customs. The New Zealanders were strong enough to assert the dignity of their own usages, and so got them respected by the authorities. Thus, in the charter granted to the colony of New Zealand there are the following clauses affecting the natives:—

"Within such (aboriginal) districts the laws, customs, and usages of the aboriginal inhabitants, so far as they are not repugnant to the general principle of humanity, shall for the present be maintained."

"In cases arising between the aboriginal inhabitants of New Zealand alone, beyond the limits of the said aboriginal districts, and in whatever relates to the relations to, and the dealings of, such aboriginal inhabitants with each other, beyond the said limits, the courts and magistrates of the entire province, or of the district in which such cases may arise, shall enforce such native laws, customs, and usages, as aforesaid."

Now for a case to illustrate the position of our Australians.

Bon Jon killed Yamer Ween, at Geelong, on 2nd September, 1841, in some quarrel about his wife, Mary. Hearing that "white-fellow" was after him, he fled to Lake Colac, some fifty miles to the westward. Mr. M'Kerror, the chief constable, followed his track, and arrested him at night, in the midst of the tribe. Poor Mary was in sad trouble at the seizure, and, finding her entreaties for his release useless, begged the constable at least to allow the captive to take her 'possum-rug extra with him, because the watch-house was so "cabaun" (cold). Bon Jon's only remark to the officer was that he killed Ween by accident: he intended to give him a good waddying only.

The trial came on before Judge Willis, at Melbourne, on 15th September, 1841. As the prisoner had been for a little while in the native police, he was somewhat acquainted with English; but the judge was by no means sure that he understood what was said to him. The man evidently could not realise that he had done anything so very wrong. Under similar circumstances, native custom sanctioned personal chastisement at the hand of the aggrieved party; and, if death ensued, the friends of the deceased settled the affair with the survivor. The Rev. Mr. Tuckfield, the missionary, was questioned about such usages. He promptly answered: "Under *all* circumstances they do not deem murder a crime."

Then came on the legal discussion. Mr. Barry, afterwards Sir Redmond Barry, the honourable originator of the Melbourne University, contended that the Crown had no power to limit the authority of the natives deciding quarrels among themselves; that if subjects at all, the whole machinery of British jurisprudence must be applied to them. The Crown officer, Mr. Croke, in reply, produced the opinions of three judges of New South Wales, at various periods, Messrs. Forbes, Dowling, and Burton, to the effect that the natives were amenable to the laws brought out by the colonists. The judge then went into some laboured arguments about the respective rights of ceded, conquered, and assumed territories, and decided that the natives were under British rule. "But," says he, "can I legally exercise my jurisprudence with reference to any crime committed by the aborigines against each other?" He mentioned that, in the island of St. Vincents, the British agreed not to interfere with the customs and intercourse of the Caribs towards each other. He gives it as his opinion that, "There is no express law which makes the aborigines subject to our Colonial Code;" and he very sensibly adds, "I desire to see protection of their rights by laws adapted to their capacity and suited to their wants,—the protection of all equal and all powerful justice."

The jury were unanimous in their decision that the prisoner was not in a capacity to put in a plea to the jurisdiction of the court, and that he had not sufficient capacity to say whether he was guilty or not. So ended, without an end, this memorable trial. There is little need now in Victoria to argue the subject of native rights, as the ancient lords of the soil will soon be laid beneath it.

PROTECTORS AND NATIVE POLICE.

The investigations of a House of Commons' committee upon the aborigines originated the formation of a Port Phillip Protectorate of

Digitized by Google

the Aborigines. The benevolent Lord Glenelg, then Secretary of the Colonies, announced this institution to Governor Gipps on 31st January, 1838. Mr. George Robinson, who had been so successful in gathering in the remnant of the hunted Tasmanians, was appointed Chief Protector, at a salary of £500 a-year. Originally a mechanic of Hobart Town, with little education, but great energy, tact, kindness, and pious zeal, he had lived much with the blacks, learned their language, gained their confidence, and so conciliated the infuriated and decimated tribes. His assistants in the Protectorate were the following persons, sent from England: Messrs. Sievwright, Dredge, Thomas, and Parker. Mr. Le Soeuf was afterwards nominated Assistant Protector. These received £250 salary, and 10s. 6d. a-day for expenses.

This system continued till the end of 1849, after which Mr. W. Thomas was appointed sole guardian, at a salary of £600. The outlay on account of the aborigines of Victoria during the seven years from 1852–9, has been as follows:—1852, the sum of £1690; 1853, £2378; 1854, £951; 1855, £1931; 1856, £934; 1857, £1528; 1858, £956. Of these sums, strange to say, the amount for bedding and clothing for the poor creatures was only £750. We are unable to say how much they have drawn from the public funds for food during that period, as, rather oddly, the items of "provisions" and official "forage" are put together.

In addition, we may state that a worthy schoolmaster, Mr. Hinkins, of Moonie Ponds, received payment for the board of two orphan children, of whom he took the charge. Their father, Bungulene, chief of the Gipps Land tribe, was captured for a supposed outrage, and died broken-hearted, in the Melbourne gaol. His widow subsequently married again, and that in due Christian form. Upon the breaking up of the Merri Creek school, the two lads fell into the good hands of the kind old schoolmaster. We were well acquainted with both of them.

From the first, nothing but disappointment and dissatisfaction attended the course of these Protectors. The colonists, as a mass were violently opposed to their proceedings, and the Government afforded them little sympathy; but there can be no doubt that though the natives made no further progress in civilisation, they were at least preserved from the violence of cruel men, and the property of the squatter became safer.

Mr. Dredge soon resigned his appointment from the conviction of the uselessness of the Protectorate, and the hindrance which he felt to his efforts as a missionary. There is some sense in his complaint,—"I am required to act against the blacks as well as for them, thereby necessarily inducing in their minds a suspicion subversive of their confidence, and calculated to expose me to their resentment."

The English Government had been influenced by noble motives in the establishment of the Protectorate, though rendered inoperative for good by uncontrollable circumstances. The same benevolent spirit actuated the counsels of the Ministry, as afterwards led Lord Normanby, when Secretary of the Colonial Department, to give the following instructions to Governor Hobson, upon forming the New Zealand Protectorate:—"All dealings with the aborigines for their lands must be conducted on the same principles of sincerity, justice, and good faith, as must govern your transactions with them for the recognition of her Majesty's sovereignty in the island; nor is this all; they must not be permitted to enter into any contracts, in which they might be ignorant, and unintentional authors of injuries to themselves."

The employment of the natives for police was first suggested by Captain Lonsdale, who, in 1836, recommended Captain Machonochie's plan. A corps was formed in 1839, under a gentleman named Villiers. The discipline was bad, the leader was dismissed, and his men bolted to the bush. Captain Dana had twenty-four natives under his command in 1842, in a thorough soldier-like condition. Half the expenses of this establishment came out of the Aboriginal Fund; the cost in four years was £55,000. Many saw with apprehension the arming of one portion of natives against the others, knowing how the deadly animosity and revenge of a tribe may thus be gratified under the shelter of the law. Thus we read of one charge of theirs upon a tribe for the murder of a native girl, "It is probable that the murdered child was revenged seventeen to one; for a native policeman counted upon his fingers by the evening fire the number each of them had killed, and they amounted to seventeen." They were an idle, ignorant, drunken set of fellows, about whose moral condition no care was taken, and whose conduct became so bad as to compel the authorities to disband the force.

GOVERNMENT OF TRIBES AND NUMBERS.

The form of government among the Australians is one of great simplicity. There are certain understood usages and customs of society, which stand in the place of laws, to which prompt obedience is required, and to the infraction of which the tribe affixes and enforces certain penalties. But there is no

Digitized by Google

personal despotism, no will of one to be bowed to. The bully of a camp stands the best chance of having his head broken in strife, and coalitions for tyrannical purposes are unknown. Practically their constitution is a democratic one, though unblest, like the Maories, Indians, Americans, and English, with stump orators.

Nominally, the old men are chiefs; and, by virtue of their experience, as well as the sanction of high antiquity, exercise the principal influence in the tribe. Sometimes one is invested with the name of chief or king, although no extra attention seems ever paid to him, nor is any presumption of power evident. In some tribes a sort of hereditary distinction has been noticed; in others, an election of head takes place.

A distinction very analogous to that of castes has been spoken of by some travellers. Thus, in North Australia, near Port Essington, three such orders were remarked. The Manjar-ojalli, or fire Manjar, was the lowest; the Manjar-wuli, or land Manjar, was the next; while the highest was the Mambulgit, or sea caste. A valuable and learned missionary, when in the northern and remote parts of New South Wales, observed some very strange family distinctions among the dark race. In one family all the sons are called Ippata, and the daughters Ippai. In a second, the sons are Murri, and the daughters Mata. In a third, the sons are Kubbi, and daughters Kapota; while in a fourth, they are respectively Kumbo and Buta. Now, an Ippai may marry an Ippata of another family, or a Kapota. A Murri may take a Buta, a Kubbi an Ippata, and a Kumbo a Mata. The children of an Ippai by an Ippata become Kumbo and Buta; but by a Kapota, Murri and Mata. The children of a Murri are Ippai and Ippata, while those of a Kubbi are Kumbo and Buta.

The punishment of grave offences is with the spear, and the wound is generally in the leg; but the waddy is used between parties in public, when an injury has been inflicted. The offender calmly presents his head for the complainant's blows with the stick. If content with a fair revenge, no return is made: the bleeding head is raised, and the hands of reconciliation join. Sometimes the patience of the penitent is too severely tried, and his resentment is re-enkindled into action.

At other times, the old European system of ordeal is ordered. The defendant stands forth naked, and at a certain distance receives a given number of spears, which he does his best to avoid by his agility. A shield is usually given to the defaulter to aid him in warding off the attack. This is one way of affording satisfaction.

A traveller once saw a fine young fellow preparing to undergo this trial of his nerves and sinews. He had been found guilty of running away with another man's wife, though other lubras maliciously hinted that she ran away with him. Brought face to fact in public before the aggrieved husband, he goe himself ready for the shower of spears. The Englishman asked him if he was not afraid. He replied, "No me pear (fear)." Then, pointing to his shield, he added, "No me pear—me look out—me catch him like o' that (flourishing his shield); me 'top 'pear (stop spear)—me catch him—me no care." In this particular instance his courage and agility were not put to the test. The husband, for reasons best known to himself, declined to cast the spear. He might, perhaps, feel inwardly grateful to the fellow for the removal of some nuisance from his neighbourhood.

The tribes were numerous, but composed of few individuals. They retained their own recognised grounds, over which they were constantly migrating, but crossing the border occasionally on friendly visits to adjoining states. They have no idea of the time of settlement, merely saying, "plenty long while ago—always sit down here." The Yarra tribe extended from the sea to the dividing range, fifty or sixty miles to the north. The Western Port line reached to the Tarwin. Rivers, lakes, and mountains formed the boundaries of tribes. The divisions upon the flat land near the Murray are less distinct, but well understood. Six tribes on that river now reside within a space of three hundred miles of frontage. The Warriguls, or wild blacks, of Gipps Land, dwelt in the rocky fastnesses of the Australian Alps. Among the few reserves for the natives is one in Western Port of 822 acres, and one on the north and south sides of the Yarra of 1908 acres.

The numbers of the tribes have experienced a fearful decrease. Twenty years ago they were many times greater than now. Mr. ex-Protector Parker thinks that 2000 is the utmost amount of the aboriginal population of Victoria, and nearly all of these residing upon the banks of the Murray, where they seldom come in contact with Europeans. Mr. Robinson wrote thus of the Glenelg tribe in 1845: "A bold and warlike race; tall, strong, and well made. They are exceedingly numerous, and have been estimated at 2000; I think it probable they are from ten to fifteen hundred." When we were last upon that river we saw but a few isolated individuals.

Mr. Surveyor Tyers, of Gipps Land, a highly respectable and competent authority, declares that the numbers in that district

Digitized by Google

have fallen from 800 to 80, ten to one, in fifteen years; that in 1858 there were but 41 men, 24 women, and 15 children, mostly half-castes, and young people. In the Omeo district, among the Alps, the natives were reduced from 300 to 60 in ten years. The Goulburn tribe, now a miserable remnant, mustered 600 a few years ago. The two tribes by the Port Phillip Bay were a short time since 300, but were brought down to 32 in 1858. Foster Fyans, Esq., J.P., collected 297 together in 1837 near Geelong, but cannot now learn that twenty of them are alive. If such has been the decline in a country only known to the whites some seven or eight and twenty years, we wonder not at the mournful desolation by the shore of Port Jackson, on whose waters, in 1788, the English saw sixty-seven boats of natives at once.

In 1858, a committee of the Council of Victoria collected what information they could as to the numbers of the people. We now present the reader with some of these results.

Ten neighbouring tribes amounted to 179 persons in 1843. Since then 88 have died and 25 been born. Mr. Warden Wills ascertained that the Omeo tribes were 500 strong in 1835; he knew but two men and three women alive in 1858! The Colac tribe had 19; the Mitta Mitta, 12; the Guiningmatong of the Alps, 3; the Warrnambool, 9; the Pertobe, 40; the Lal-lal, 15; Lake Condor, 50; Portland, 25; Merino Downs, 34; Wannon, 9; Emu Creek, 15; Eumeralla and Darlot Creek, 40 each; Edward river, 30; County of Villiers, five tribes, including Port Fairy, Mount Rouse, and Hopkins river, 150 to 200; County of Heytesbury, 18; Lower Loddon, 40; Geelong, 9 males and 5 females; seven tribes, from Swan Hill to Moorapal Lake, 55 altogether; Echuca and north-east Murray, 500; Belfast, 17; Benalla to the Murray, 140; Owangutha, by the Murray and Goulburn junction, 80; Wannon Valley, 23 men, 12 women, 2 half-caste children.

In every tribe the men greatly outnumber the women, as in Heytesbury and other places the men are three to one more numerous.

CIVILISATION.

The civilisation of a people is not a very intelligible idea. The aborigines themselves have a belief that to be "all the same like him whitefellow," is, among some few common things, to be at least accomplished in the arts of smoking, swearing, and drinking; and they seldom, in their intercourse with us, get beyond that border of our condition.

As to living in the close, smoky, confined habitations of whites in so fine a climate, that could not be endured. To wear our tight fitting dresses seems equally absurd. Then they cannot comprehend the purpose of so much hard work, when they can live without it so easily, enjoy their country strolls, and obey the will of no man. We cannot give them the notion of saving for their children, as they know that nature, which had so bountifully provided for their wants, will be equally generous to their offspring. They have no objection to money, — that is, those of them so much changed as to have made some progress in pseudo-civilisation,—as they can apply it to the same chosen use adopted by the white people around them, the purchase of strong drink. They who work at all, do so for a time only, and for the object of obtaining the means of a debauch. As one told us, "Blackfellow take him shilling public-house, knock him down drunk."

Certain good people have more elevated notions of civilisation than merely working for clothing and comforts. They would have the blacks instructed. But for what practical purpose? If so instructed, or, rather, so trained, as to become Christians, *all* would be gained; but when the principles of piety are so little recognised by our own people, among whom they mix themselves, we can hardly expect to be very successful with the natives. We are thus beset with difficulties on all sides.

The blacks themselves are opposed to the civilising process. When Encounter Bay Bob was killed, while acting as a shepherd, by his own brother, the only apology offered by the latter was, "Him no good — him too much like whitefellow."

Whites could ridicule our efforts, when we find one writing, "With a certain class of people it seems but just necessary to acquaint them that some well-meaning gentlemen have persuaded a few natives to halloo a psalm, or recite a prayer, the meaning of either of which in most cases is a mystery to them, and they conclude that such a tribe is beginning to advance in the social state." A worthy settler taught his blacks to sing,

> We all sit down together,
> We're all met here together,
> We're brothers all together,
> Ye-o, ye-o, ye-o.

Some of his civilised servants changed the rhyme for them into

> We all sit down together,
> We all get drunk together.
> &c., &c.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Gunther, missionary of Wellington Valley, has these remarks upon the difficulties of civilisation:—"The evils resulting from polygamy (which is permitted by the vile as well as absurd code of laws prevailing among those people) are great and manifold. On the one hand, it causes constant strife and fightings; on the other hand, the elder or influential men, possessed of a plurality of wives, being in reality only the keepers of them, have it in their power to hold out certain allurements to the young, who cannot obtain wives, and by obliging the latter, as it is considered, the former can command or extort obedience. This accounts for the fact, that aboriginal males, however useful and steady they may have been among Europeans when boys, as soon as they grow up to manhood, fall back into their wandering, unsettled habits."

When the question of granting of land to them was put by the Victorian legislature, Mr. Clow, police magistrate, recommended their location by Western Port, and the procuring for them wives from the Polynesian islands. He submits, however, "This suggestion would be perfectly useless if it is desired not to perpetuate the race of aborigines, but merely to treat with some show of attention those that are alive, and until they gradually disappear, through that want joined with others. It cannot have escaped the observations of the first colonists that the men having females and children, avoided more than others the haunts of the white man." The monetary difficulty of government is thus disposed of by a colonist, subscribed "Aristides": "Expense! the expense of saving a people we are disinheriting from massacre."

We had an interesting account from the Hon. Donald Kennedy, of an old man of a tribe near his station claiming the honours of chieftainship. He was regularly supplied with rations, and appointed to occasional honourable employments about the place. He was particularly exemplary in his conduct, and scrupulously attentive to the interests of the master: any irregularities in the behaviour of the servants were in the most dignified manner reported to headquarters. Esteeming himself something better than common blackfellow, he never bemeaned himself by drinking with the men of the establishment in their hut, though he was not indifferent to a glass, provided it was handed to him by Mr. Kennedy in the house, so that he might drink "like a gentleman." His wife was a clean, orderly, good creature, remarkably solicitous to keep her husband in proper trim, as he never presumed to go up to the house until he had changed his dress, shaved himself, and put on a clean shirt. When Mary had finished her morning work she would put on her best gown and walk up to sit with her mistress in the parlour.

From the beginning of our connection with New Holland, in 1788, various attempts have been made to raise them. The first chaplain took a native girl into his house. She, after awhile, took to the woods a naked savage again. Governor Darling, nearly forty years ago, employed some as a police force. At various places they have been engaged with great success, as shepherds, stockkeepers, splitters, shearers, and reapers; but they were never to be depended upon, leaving suddenly when the whim came. They were very useful to the squatters at the time of the gold fever, taking charge of flocks and herds which would otherwise have been dispersed. We have seen a party of eight going from farm to farm, well clad, to gather in the harvest. But all this fit of industry lasted but a little while, to be followed by the blanket and grub eating.

Governor Macquarie, nearly half-a-century ago, established a school to train children to trades. Some years after Mr. Cunningham wrote, "Being all associated together, and their native instincts and ideas still remaining paramount, they took to their old habits again as soon as freed from thraldom." Major Goulburn, therefore, broke up the institution, and sent the children to the Orphan School for Europeans. The experiment similarly failed in Port Phillip, now Victoria. Mr. Thomas addressed the settlers in 1841 about the bad example of the whites, saying, "Morally speaking, the lines to my poor blacks have not fallen in pleasant places;" he urged that none but holy men should be employed in civilising them. Messrs. Parker and Dredge complained in the same way. The first gentleman said, "The greatest obstacle to their civilisation is to be traced to moral causes, and not to any physical disabilities." We must refer the reader to other facts under the head of "Missions."

Some advance was made with a few, who even located themselves upon farms granted by Government; but drink in most cases proved the ruin of their peace and the destruction of their lives. Two or three had farms near the residence of Mr. Parker, a warm friend to all of the race. At Mount Franklin school, in 1859, we found, in passing, but seven or eight pupils.

No wonder that Governor Latrobe wrote:—"The question naturally arises, What can be the real advantages of education reaped by the individuals, or its influence on the tribes to which they belong, when that education terminates by a return to the depraved habits of a savage life?" When,

Digitized by Google

however, the Government broke up the Protectorate, they sold nearly a thousand sheep belonging to the Mount Franklin School, and appropriated the funds to the general revenue.

The only hopeful place at present is Poonindie, to which we refer in "Missions." Describing the marriage of a man there, and his charge of a flock, the Bishop of Adelaide says:—"This omen of success is happily corroborated and followed up by other instances of solid progress in industrial habits, civilised life, and Christian behaviour." Sorry for a moment to appear to damp the zeal of those good friends, we cannot avoid a melancholy foreboding that in a short time even this institution will prove no lasting good, though based upon the only sensible system yet adopted—that of isolation from both whites and other blacks. *It comes too late.* The race has become effete, few or hardly any children are born among them even under these most favourable circumstances, and deaths are frequent. The Buntingdale Mission was similar in some respects, and for a time most hopeful; but, as the Rev. Mr. Threlkeld well observes, "the frightful mortality among them weighed down the spirit of the Wesleyan Missionaries."

However desirable to have them work for our advantage, and live with us for the imitation of our customs, yet the social impediments to their course of advancement seem overpowering. When Captain Grey was forsaken by his guide, Miago, who preferred returning to the bush, he simply remarked, "He chose that course, and I think I should have done the same."

To adopt our habits, they must be entirely removed from the associations of the *mia mia*. And what have we to offer in exchange for endearing relations, joyous freedom, and unanxious existence? The man is thrust upon a competitive society to earn his bread. He is exposed to the gibes and contempt of the lowest of our countrymen. He is herded with men from whom he learns the most obviously developed principles of European civilisation,—swearing and drinking.

It is true he eats better food, wears better clothing, and sleeps in better dwellings. But where is his home? Who will be his mother, his sister, his brother? Who will ally herself as wife to his dark skin? Can he ever know the sweetness of a child's love? No! he soon tires of our work, our food, our confined habitations, our heartless ridicule; and hastens back to his camp fire to find a friend, to feel himself a man, to dwell with those who can love him.

If such cases of flight from civilisation be held as a proof of the irreclaimability of that race, there are not wanting similar instances among other tribes. Von Martius speaks of an Indian of Brazil who, passing through college, was admitted to the Roman Catholic priesthood. "But all at once," he says, "he renounced his new profession, threw aside his habit, and fled naked into the woods to his old way of life."

Mr. Guardian Thomas sees no way of civilising the adults, but would confine his attention to the young. These are his remarks in 1858:—"My suggestion to remove the children early from their tribe and parents may, at first glance, appear relentless, and emanting from a breast void of feeling; but whoever will take the trouble to reflect seriously upon the result of the many previous efforts in the colony, and our sister colonies throughout New Holland, to retain the aboriginal rising generation, after they had been educated, from retiring and mingling with their race and off to the wilderness, must be convinced that nothing short of removing them a considerable distance from their tribe can permanently improve their condition, and avert the extinction of the aboriginal race." He is quite right in saying that the isolated ones "drop down to the vices and dissipation of the dregs of society, and find an early tomb."

In the meantime the young people are rapidly dying off, and none rising in their place. By the time they are taught to read, the scroll of eternity is unrolled before them. We teach them to handle the spade; *but it is to dig their graves.* There are many thus, who so closely identify efforts for civilisation with the decline and extinction of the blacks, that they would rather exclaim, with Count Strzelecki, "Leave them alone."

Sir T. L. Mitchell bursts forth in these warm terms upon this subject:—"Such health and exemption from disease; such intensity of existence in what must be far beyond civilised men, with all that art can do for them; and the proof of this is to be found in the failure of all attempts to persuade those free denizens of uncultivated earth to forsake it for the tilled ground. They prefer the land unbroken and free from earliest curse pronounced against the first banished and first created man. The only kindness we could do for them would be to let them and their wide range of territory alone; to act otherwise and profess goodwill is but hypocrisy."

Mr. Breton said, thirty years ago, in New South Wales:—"Forty years have elapsed since the country was colonised, and I have not yet heard of a single native having been reclaimed from barbarism." Judge Field, of Sydney, echoes the same sentiment, saying: "I am of opinion that our savages will

Digitized by Google

never be any other than they are." His Honor adds:—

Then let him pass—a blessing on his head!
And long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the woods.
May never we pretend to civilise,
And make him only captive.

But all this fine sentiment does not satisfy the Christian man; for he looks upon his dark brother as one possessed of a kindred soul, and an heir of immortality. He sighs, therefore, at the native gliding away without a sign.

DECLINE.

So strongly do we feel upon the part which strong drink has borne in the decline of the aborigines, that we hardly dare give expression to our sentiments of disgust and horror at the devastation which it has made, and at the cruelty of those who have thus ministered to their destruction.

Nominally, laws were passed to punish those who held the cup of death to the natives; but those were not enforced. Mr. Gillies, the magistrate of Warrnambool, had, however, the honest courage, some time since, to inflict the penalty of five pounds upon a publican for this offence. Would that his conduct were imitated! Perhaps, as a writer has remarked, "it becomes a nature so active in the suppression of slavery to consider betimes, in taking up new countries, how the aboriginal races can be preserved, and how the evil effects of spirituous liquors, of gunpowder, and of diseases, more inimical to them than even slavery, may be counteracted." Especially does this seem necessary when the poor creatures, as Mr. Rusden, their friend, has declared, "have no moral check to appeal to, and the craving for the excitement of drink becomes a physical disease, controlling their wills, as it does in many cases the civilised man, who has had better advantages, less excuse for yielding, and less temptation."

If the circumstances attending the intemperance of Europeans be regarded as such an evil as to call forth the utmost self-denial and exertion of their fellow-countrymen to arrest its progress, are we to be indifferent to its ravages among those dark unfortunates? We cannot be unmoved at this tale of their Guardian:—"At the Merri Creek, one morning at daybreak, there were four or five lying bedded in the mud, drunk, not dead; cold comes on, and as soon as disease touches a black's chest, you cannot save him." Old Mahrout was asked the secret of their decline, and thus explained it:—"Because they knock about in liquor, and no children because they go with a good many white men." A volume could say no more.

Repeatedly have we fallen in with drunken groups, and witnessed deeds of violence. More than once have we narrowly escaped an onslaught from some infuriated native, in the attempt to rescue the female victim of his rage. We have passed a tree, from the side of which, the day before, the dead body of a native had been removed, who perished from exposure one wet winter's night, when lying out drunk and naked near the public-house.

Again and again have we expostulated with publicans, near whose doors were transacted deeds of disgusting abomination, only to be perpetrated by savages, and only by them when brutally intoxicated. We have seen a handsome young fellow, clean and respectably dressed, ride up to the Hotel Post Office for his master's letters. In an hour or two after, we have beheld him with his drunken countrymen near, his master's property injured or lost, and he himself, with foul, torn clothes, bleeding from an encounter.

One evening, when visiting the Ballaarat Gold-fields, in 1852, we saw a party of aborigines plied with drink by Englishmen, until their bestial manners and coarse speech excited the brutal mirth of their cruel tempters. Throughout the night the bush was disturbed with the mad yells and quarrels of the poor creatures. Early in the morning we rose to ascertain the cause of moaning at no great distance. To our horror there lay before us a wretched man in the mud, with nothing upon him but a shirt, thoroughly drenched with a night of cold, wintry rain. While his limbs shook with the inclemency of the weather, his brow was wet with the sweat of agony. In answer to questions, he groaned out, "Me killed—Long Tom did it—him drunk—him stab me knife." Lifting his shirt, we beheld a large gash in his side, out of which part of his bowels were protruding, and mingling with the grit of the soil! The doctor arrived, and pronounced the case hopeless. The poor fellow must die. But who was the murderer?

Prostitution and its effects may be regarded as second only to drink, and as its natural accompaniment in the work of destruction.

In the early times of all the colonies, the want of women was felt to be the cause of much social evil. Female convicts were fewer than those of the other sex. Men, young and unmarried, were not only foremost in emigration, but for a long time were almost alone in the foreign field. Usually of ardent character, energetic disposition, and robust habits of body, with no elevated state of

Digitized by Google

moral impulses, the bush shepherds and stock keepers of Australia were early brought into association with their black female neighbours, with decided disadvantage to both parties. At one time force, at other times the influence of bribes, were employed to obtain these objects of lawless passion.

The first consequences were distrust of the whites on the part of husbands and brothers, frequent retaliation, and much blood-shedding. But, soon discovering their own feebleness of arm, and gradually losing feelings of dignity and independence in the treacherous drink of the stranger, they ceased to regard the act otherwise than one of necessity, and as a means for gratifying their own newly-excited and unnatural thirst.

The moral effect upon the women was most disastrous. Their strange infatuation for white men everywhere led them into frequent and fatal conflicts with the males of their tribes. They, more than the men, imbibed the taste for drink, and suffered far more in proportion. Those who had children neglected them; and they who were but recently married *never had them afterwards.* They seemed wholly reckless of the opinion of their friends, and utterly regardless of any evil consequences to themselves. Rapid and wretched was their fall.

The same thing was observed among the Indians. In 1761, President Stiles heard from an intelligent Indian a statement which led him to exclaim:—"From this account it would seem that the morals of the Indians were corrupt before the arrival of the English, that, although a strong prejudice against illegitimate births existed, it did not prevent prostitution, and only produced abortion and infanticide, and that these last customs being broken up by the influence of the whites, all reserve was thrown aside, and the Indians became shamefully licentious. The young women hesitated not to receive presents for their shame. Is it wonderful," adds the good man, "that communities so licentious, and, added to this, so indolent and drunken, should not increase?—that they should even rapidly decline?" Dr. Wilson, the ethnologist, noticed the operation of the same cause.

The physical effects soon manifested themselves. Disease, the fell disease of vice, crept among the tribes, blighting peace of families, destroying social pleasures, and bringing gall into their daily existence.

Often, when travelling about in the bush, for a number of years past, have we been reminded of the presence of this dreadful scourge. A Melbourne magistrate once saw a man kicking a child toward a fire, but stopped doing so on his approach. Just then a lubra came and took it up. Their appearance is thus noted:—"Two such hideous objects I never saw. They were a perfect mass of sores, both of them." Turning to the man, and upbraiding him for his cruelty, the fellow sulkily said, "No—no—me no cruel—me want to die."

Mr. Cunningham, about forty years ago, noticed the effect of this intercourse,—the destruction of the children. "Personal prostitution among those associating with the whites is carried on to a great extent, the husbands disposing of the favour of their wives to the convict servants for a slice of bread or a pipe of tobacco. The children produced by this intercourse are generally sacrificed." The Rev. J. C. S. Handt, Lutheran Missionary at Moreton Bay, bears similar testimony, in these words:—"A principal cause of their decrease is the prostitution of their wives to Europeans. This base intercourse not only retards the procreation of their own race, but almost always tends to the destruction of the offspring brought into existence by its means."

Drink and prostitution are proximate as well as direct causes of death, by rendering the body more susceptible to attack by disease, and by inducing those reckless habits which prevent them taking common precautions against the contraction and increase of disorders. Well might the Rev. Dr. Brown write many years ago:—"A glance at their habits will convince us that the true solution of the question (of decline) is to be found in *disease.*"

As if this were not sufficient to account for the sterility of the native women, some writers, as Count Strzelecki, assert the doctrine that no such female who has borne children to a white man can afterwards produce offspring by her own countryman. The fact of hardly a child, excepting a half-caste, being now ever born among the poor creatures of the settled districts, seems a strong argument in favour of this opinion. On the other hand, such a result is never observed among other dark races; for nothing can exceed the fecundity of the negro women of the United States, between whom and the white people more illicit intercourse takes place than even in Australia. A few have employed the argument to try to establish the theory of the independence of the species of the inhabitants of New Holland.

Dr. Thomson, late surgeon to the Niger expedition, investigated this question when visiting New South Wales, in 1849. Respecting the Count's theory, he writes:—"I am obliged to say, that all I could ascertain was quite inconsistent with it." He thinks that much may be due to the broken down constitutions of those who return to wirlie life, after a residence with the white men. The in-

Digitized by Google

fecundity of the gins arises not from any deviation of nature's laws, as it is attempted to be proved, but because the European, wherever he takes his civilisation, takes his vices also.

This gentleman went further. He interrogated the blacks themselves. "On informing," he says, "some of the Wyong natives and others of Hunter's River, that this to be acquired sterility of their 'gins' had been imported, they all regarded it with derision, assuring me they had known it to occur repeatedly in their own and other tribes, for native women to bear children to their black husbands or companions after having borne children to Europeans."

As some demonstration of decay, the following figures are put before the reader :— In 1788 it is supposed the native population about Port Jackson and Botany Bay was about 1500 ; as many as 67 boats of theirs were seen at once in the harbour. In 1853 but eight remained! Maoroo, the last of the Botany Bay tribe, thus told his tale to Mr. Miles :—"This all my country—nice country. My father chief long time ago, now I chief ; water all pretty. When I little fellow, plenty blackfellow—plenty gin —plenty picaninny—great corrobory—plenty fight. Ah! all gone now, all gone ; only me left to walk about."

The desolation after the small-pox, introduced among them by our people the year after the settlement of Sydney, is mournfully described by Captain Hunter. "It was truly shocking," he says, "to go round the coves of this harbour, which were formerly so much frequented by the natives : where, in the caves in the rocks, which used to shelter whole families in bad weather, were now to be seen men, women, and children lying dead."

The decrease among those of Port Phillip or Victoria is equally well marked. The Yarra and coast tribes numbered 92 in 1848, and 36 in 1858 ; there had been but one birth in ten years! Mr. Parker speaks of ten tribes having 88 die out of 179, within his own knowledge. Of four tribes about Lal-lal but 15 remain. Two tribes mustering 32 in 1858 had formerly 300. Of a large tribe in Gipps Land there are now but one man and a half-caste child. Upon the authority of Mr. Wills, police magistrate, we learn that 500 of the Omeo blacks were existing in 1835, and in 1858 but two men and three women. The Gipps Land tribes had decreased from 800 to 80, says Mr. Commissionor Tyers, in fifteen years. Mr. Thomas saw 900 collected together at one time near Melbourne. Mr. Threlkeld speaks of a tribe in New South Wales being reduced from 164 to 3 only, in four years.

The marked decrease of females, as contrasted with men, is to be accounted for in the destructive agency of drink. Observing among a group of natives only three women to a dozen men, we learned, from one well acquainted with the tribe, that the disappearance of several women within his knowledge was entirely owing to drunken quarrels. The murder was committed, the body was buried, and the silence of the grave was preserved.

The picture drawn by Mr. Forest of the Indians applies to the Australians :—"Without hope, without ambition, debarred from even the excitement of war, they sink into a state of stupid listlessness, and think only of enjoying the present by an unrestrained indulgence in brutalising pleasures. They become more indolent than ever ; they indulge in intemperance as far as their resources and opportunities will allow."

They lose heart with the helplessness of their situation. Derrimut thus tells the sorrows of his people, when speaking to a magistrate in Melbourne, and pointing down the leading street of the city :—"All this mine—all along here Derrimut's once ; no matter now—very soon tumble down (die)." He was asked, "Have you any children?" Throwing himself into a passion, he exclaimed, "Why me have lubra—why me have picaninny? You have all this place; no good have lubra—no good have children me; me tumble down, die very soon."

When visiting the Burra Burra copper mines in 1850, we witnessed a great excitement among the blacks in that neighbourhood. It appeared that as the smelting works were in vigorous operation, and the forests near were insufficient to keep the fires going, the Mallée scrub, towards the Murray, was being invaded for fuel. The natives, as easily and as groundlessly excited as children, had got a belief that the whitefellow intended to cut down all the trees of the country, so that there would be no shelter for them nor their game. They would often stop the wood carts, and imploringly say to the drivers,— "Why you do this? Why you cut him down scrub? No kangaroo—no wallaby for blackfellow and picaninny. Why you do the like o' that?"

In the evening, at their camp fire, they would sing a mournful plaint about the cruelty of the white man, who "take him everything blackfellow country." They felt as Heki the Maori did, when he thus addressed the missionary :—"If the great Creator thus continues to press upon us, you will soon toll your bell, but there will be none to answer it."

It is no satisfaction to be told by Mr. Pritchard, the ethnologist, "It may happen

Digitized by Google

that in the course of another century, the aboriginal races of most parts of the world will have ceased entirely to exist." There is no arresting the progress of their decay. Wherever the European goes, his simoon breath destroys them.

Among the Indians of South America a sickness comes upon the approach of Pale-faces, and the tribes sink gradually away. Even with the apology that we come to bless them with the sweets of civilisation, our footsteps are to them the harbingers of death; as the naturalist on the Amazons observed, "Before the Indians can be reclaimed in large numbers, it is most likely they will become extinct as a race."

Mr. Merivale, in his "Colonies and Colonisation," has presented the alternative of perpetuity or destruction in these terms:—"Native races must in every instance either perish, or be amalgamated with the general population of their country." This gives little hope for even the Maories, and none for the Australians. The existing struggle in New Zealand is but as the dying throes of a people sensible that they are "marching slowly down the gloomy and dark road to extinction;" and, in sheer desperation, they are flinging themselves upon the bayonets of the white strangers, in search of an heroic rather than an inglorious end. Peace or war, amity or hatred,—each matters little. When the chief of the Amazonian Passé Indians was dying, he exclaimed:—"The people of my nation have always been good friends to the Carwas (whites); but before my grandchildren are old like me the name of Passé will be forgotten."

Yet still the question returns, why should our dark races pass away? There was no apparent diminution of physical force, moral power, or mental activity. Humboldt speaks of the Peruvians as "the fading remnants of a society sinking amidst storms, overthrown and shattered by overwhelming catastrophes." It is otherwise with our aborigines. They retire to the cold shades amidst serenity and peace;

> Like ships that have gone down at sea,
> When heaven was all tranquility.

The signs of their decrepitude suddenly fall upon them as the curtain of night descends in the tropics. With diseased frames, with hopeless feelings, homeless and childless, the present generation glides away from us. Like the leaves of an English autumn, they wither and fall; but, alas! there is no spring for them. The *Sheoak* hangs its mournful, weird-like appendages over their tombs; and, on it knotted, leafless strings, the passing breezes play their solemn requiem.

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX.

Having been fortunate enough to have some interviews with one of the old originals of the colony, the man who first rowed up the Yarra, and established a home on the site of Melbourne, before Mr. Fawkner or Mr. Batman saw Batman's Hill —Mr. George Evans—we obtained his version of the story of Buckley.

One of Batman's men, on Indented Head, being fond of strolling about, fell upon a party of natives, with Buckley in their midst. He returned in great excitement to his companions, exclaiming, "I have seen a white man with the blacks." To confirm his conjectures, he took a piece of bread, walked off with it to the group, and presented it to the giant as he sat with his friends. Buckley looked at the damper awhile, and then said "This is bread." He afterwards pointed to the initial letters on his arm, and subsequently gave his name.

Our original colonist got the tale of the past from Buckley, so far as that reserved nature was willing to unfold. One of his first questions was as to his social history, his wife or wives. The quiet man assured him he had none, and that he never had one. The tribe who were so kind to him had presented a girl to him, but he had prudently declined the sparkling bargain, fearing a quarrel with some blackfellow less than himself. In answer to their importunities, the poor fellow did a better thing than argue.—he walked off into the forest alone. The young lady, betrothed, though not united, and willing, though not wooed, went after her bashful lover, and sought, by soft blandishments, to alter his resolve. He closed his eyes to her charms and his ears to her appeals. He dared not encounter the cares and responsibilities of married life, though that burden would be shared by beauty and affection. He fled from the fair one, and hid himself in the leafy solitude. Many a good laugh had the tribe at this disciple of celibacy, and the pouting maiden had to console herself with a second and a warmer love.

Mr. Evans asked why he had not tried to escape. Buckley told the story of a boat coming for wood, and his calling after the crew as they left the shore. When he found his alarmed countrymen deserting him, although he spoke in English, he relinquished even the desire to remove from his forest associates.

When, some time after this, as a squatter about twenty miles from Melbourne, Mr. Evans lost an assigned servant, and wanted Buckley, then a constable, to see about the truant, that worthy idler, who never liked motion of tongue or limb, affectionately wished that a *certain person* would take off the runaway's legs, as he should now have to walk over to the Geelong settlement in search of the rascal.

The reason of his leaving the colony was, according to our informant, the fear of the settlers that he might join the blacks against them. Our friend always regarded Buckley as one who loved ease and quietness, who had few wants and cares, and still fewer ideas.

Digitized by Google

REVIEWS OF MR. BONWICK'S COLONIAL WORKS.

Australian Geography. First Edition. 1846.

"As the parent of six children, I am bound to return my cordial thanks, not merely for your volume, which I have placed in their hands, but for an endeavour to provide for some of the educational wants of the children of the colony. Your plan appears to have been formed judiciously, and to be carried into effect with skill."—BISHOP OF TASMANIA.

"This is the work of a talented and energetic schoolmaster in Hobart Town, an admirer of M. Fellenberg, one of the enthusiasts so needful to overcome the difficulties upon education; and it is no small praise to say, that Mr. Bonwick partakes of his spirit. The work is well executed. As an essay on colonial books for schools it is an admirable production."—Sydney *Morning Herald.*

Geography. Second Edition. 1851.

"It appears to me not only to be well written, but its extracts are very appropriate, as calculated to give scholars a correct knowledge of that part of the world in which, or near which their lot is cast."—CAPTAIN CHARLES STURT (the Explorer).

"The peculiar and, we think, the crowning merit of these books is, that they have been compiled with particular reference to the notions, habits, and circumstances of our youth. They contain information upon a variety of subjects peculiar to the Australian colonies."—Sydney *Empire*, 1852.

"The execution of the book is in a high degree meritorious, and he deserves the support of all the teachers and parents in these colonies.—Melbourne *Argus.*

Geography of Australia and New Zealand. Third Edition.

"Our estimate of the value of this Australian production may be learned from the fact that, in our opinion, no homestead should be without it, and that here, as in Victoria and South Australia, it should become a class book in all our public schools."—Launcester *Examiner*, December, 1855.

"We are glad to find that Mr. James Bonwick has been engaged for some years in the compilation of such a work. An early copy of it now lies before us; and glancing through its pages, packed closely with facts relating to every feature in the geography of this and the neighbouring colonies, we are struck with the conviction that it is precisely the kind of manual that has long been wanted. Nothing seems to be omitted.—Our wonder is where he has managed to find such a mass of facts as he has compressed into this little book."—Melbourne *Age.*

"Mr. Bonwick is entitled to great credit for this attempt to create an Australian school-literature, and as his book is used by the educational boards of Melbourne, a better testimonial to its value is afforded than any general expression of approbation by the press could yield."—Sydney *Morning Herald.*

"We cannot express our gratitude too warmly to Mr. Bonwick for his really excellent grammar of Australian geography. From what we know of Mr. Bonwick's antecedents, he is the person best adapted to prepare such a work;—a man of education, liberal and enlightened views, a resident of many years standing in these Southern lands, and a person possessed of much experience in tuition, must have been well adapted for the task he has executed."—Sydney *Freeman's Journal.*

Digitized by Google

"Mr. Bonwick has been for many years resident in these colonies; he has access to the best sources of information; he has been indefatigable in his efforts to produce a book which might be a standard one on the subject he treats; and he has succeeded. —Melbourne *Argus*.

"It is the work of a man thoroughly familiar with his subject, a colonist of fourteen years' standing, a traveller, and a practical teacher. The book does not contain a superfluous word; it is what a book for schools should be,—compact and simple."—London *Athenæum*, October, 1856.

Grammar for Australian Youth.

"The grammar is a very superior book. Australian adults as well as youth, may glean much information from its pages."—Adelaide *Examiner*, 1851.

Reader for Australian Youth.

"The 'Reader' is undoubtedly one of Mr. Bonwick's best productions. Its chief merit is the fact of its being strictly Australian in character and design."—Sydney *Empire*, 1862.

Gold Diggers' Magazine.

"It contains a variety of useful and amusing information, not only for the absent digger, but the wife and family left behind; and as, from its tone, it is calculated to aid the cause of order and sound morals, apart from sectarian bias, we cordially hope that it may penetrate to every tent and hut upon the various diggings."—Victoria *Standard*, 1852.

Map of Victoria.

"In addition to the usual features of such productions, the physical features of the colonies are marked by placing against the name of the place its geological character—the first attempt of the kind here."—Melbourne *Leader*, 1856.

The Bushrangers; Illustrating the Early Days of Van Diemen's Land.

"In spite of its name, and the numerous deeds of blood that it suggests to the memory, the book is by no means a mere Newgate Calendar, but something infinitely better. It exhibits a correct position of the state of society in earlier days, and makes our present condition much more than appreciable. We cordially recommend it to any one who desires to become acquainted with the history of their real or adopted country. Mr. Bonwick deserves great credit for the series of books which he has projected."—Hobart Town *Colonial Times*, 1856.

William Buckley, The Wild White Man, and his Port Phillip Black Friends.

"Mr. Bonwick is certainly an indefatigable, interesting, and instructive writer.—He supplements the main story by a mass of information relative to the former conditions, habits, usages, and character of the aboriginal population of Australia, derived from personal observation and other authentic sources. It is extremely well got up, and edited and revised with the greatest care."—Hobart Town *Colonial Times*, 1857.

Bible Stories for Young Australians.

"They are evidently told by a mind which delights alike in the etherial freshness of these tales of glorious heroism, and in making others love them too. The book is fitted to be, and we think will be, a favourite with all Sunday-school teachers and scholars. Mr. Bonwick is a downright Australian, and his work is full of healthy Christian feeling."—*Southern Spectator*.

Digitized by Google

Discovery and Settlement of Port Phillip.

"It has been criticised in the most friendly spirit by contemporaries in all the colonies."—*Colonial Times and Tasmanian*, 1857.

"My chief object being to depict Victoria, not as she was, but as she is now, I shall not trouble the reader with long narratives of early history. These have been earnestly and copiously given by the industry of Mr. Bonwick in his recent publications."—Mr. WESTGARTH'S "Victoria in 1857."

"Mr. Bonwick has had the advantage of sitting by the fireside of many of the Old Chums, who first penetrated the Victorian wilds, and listening to their hair-breadth escapes and marvellous adventures. These he has condensed into a peculiarly nervous and racy style, which delights the reader, and makes him regret he was not there to see the men who figured conspicuously in this sitting drama, and who would be known to the greater portion of mankind only by their giving their names to some mountain, promontory, or harbour, will in Mr. Bonwick's book appear in all the reality of life, and present themselves before us as they acted, struggled and fought, and conquered in the great field of enterprise which energies and self-denial have bequeathed to their posterity."—Castlemaine *Miner's Right.*

"Mr. Bonwick's succinct and compendious narrative belongs to the class of literature denominated by the French, *Memoires pour Servir.* Future historians will turn to it as a repertory of valuable facts, lucidly, systematically, and chronologically stated; for the most part well authenticated, and all of them of the deepest interest because bearing upon the infancy and rapidly maturing youth of a country, whose splendid destinies have yet to be revealed, and whose future greatness may transcend both our hopes and our belief."—Melbourne *Argus*, 1856.

A Sketch of Boroondara.

"One thing we notice in all his works—they are Australian.—Everything Australian is tinted with the colours of Paradise by the brush of this patriotic painter."—*Southern Spectator*, 1858.

Western Victoria; Its Geography, Geology, and Social Conditions.

"It purports to be a narrative of an educational tour made by the author, in his capacity of inspector of schools in 1857; but instead of a bare record of dry statistical facts, we have a most charming, readable book, full of information of every kind, and interspersed with gossiping anecdotes, and glowing description of scenery. It is written, moreover, in an easy, flowing, attractive style."—Portland *Guardian*, December, 1858.

"He has always something to tell us, does it in easy, graceful, purpose-like style, that is charming to us; a man who knows his work and does it,—keeping withal an honest eye in his head, that can see into and through a considerable number of things, and who can relate to us what he has seen and felt without any affectation or nonsense; such an one ought not to be other than dear to us, and such an one Mr. Bonwick is.—But it is in contact with his fellow men, of every type or rank, that we like best to see Mr. Bonwick, who has a very warm sympathy with humanity in its every phase.—There are very many natural wonders in that western region, of which our readers, if they look, will find an admirable description in the volume before us, by one who is an ardent admirer of nature.—If they read it with honesty of heart, we can promise that it will give them an hour or two's very agreeable entertainment, and that it will leave them not worse or foolisher, but wiser and better men."—*Christian Times*, January, 1859.

ALSO PUBLISHED,

Geography for Young Australians. 4th edition. Sixpence.

Early Days of Melbourne.

Early Days of England.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

GENERAL PRINTING OFFICE.

FERGUSSON & MOORE

Respectfully intimate to their Friends and the Public, that they still carry on business at 48 Flinders Lane East, and solicit a liberal share of their support, confident that by general excellence of Workmanship, promptitude in the execution of Orders, and Moderate Prices, they will merit the favours of their Customers.

F. & M. would specially call attention to the additions made to their large and varied Plant, including Book and Jobbing Type of the Newest Designs, and Machinery of the latest construction.

COPPERPLATE AND LITHOGRAPHIC PRINTING.

NEWSPAPERS, BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, CIRCULARS,

BANK AND CUSTOMS' FORMS,

WHARF AND DELIVERY BOOKS, POSTERS, SHOW CARDS,

AND ALL KINDS OF

Commercial, Ornamental, and General Printing.

ESTIMATES GIVEN.

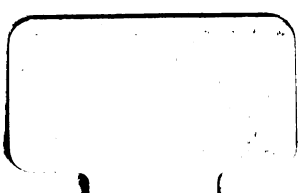
ORDERS FROM THE COUNTRY PROMPTLY ATTENDED TO.

48 Flinders Lane East, Melbourne.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google